

SEROWE : GENERAL VIEW

THE FORWARD TREAD

OR THE L.M.S. IN AFRICA

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"PIONEERS OF FREEDOM," ETC.

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CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
Preface	V
Introduction	9
I. From the Cape to Tanganyika	13
II. On the Trail of the Pioneers	21
III. The Conflict of Cultures .	35
IV. Giving the Bantu a Chance	53
V. Home Life in the New Africa	70
VI. How the Good News Spreads	83
VII. The L.M.S. in the New Africa	98

ILLUSTRATIONS

Serowe : General View	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A Central African Boy and some of his Handiwork	FACING PAGE 32
Kambole Church and Congregation	32
Boys at the Initiation Ceremonies	33
Preparing for the Evening Meal at Inyati	64
Mbereshi Modern Village	64
Girls' Boarding School, Mbereshi	65
Tiger Kloof	65
Rachel Masinga : A Former Teacher at Hope Fountain	96
Kipowe and his Wife	96
A Sunday Service at Serowe	97
Map of Central Africa	<i>page ii. of cover</i>
Map of South Africa	<i>page iii. of cover</i>

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE read my friend Mr. Chirgwin's book with intense interest, and with hearty agreement. I readily accede to his request for a few introductory words, though I know full well that I cannot add anything of value to what he has written.

Ever since the days of my boyhood I have been familiar with the names and work of L.M.S. missionaries. I count some of them now among my friends. The L.M.S. holds a warm corner in my heart. We, who love Africa can never forget that the greatest figure in her history went out as an agent of the L.M.S.; that the first missionary to translate the whole Bible into a Bantu language was one of its most honoured pioneers; that some of its men stand out among the supreme defenders of the African's rights; that it has been one of the greatest of pathfinders for the Evangel. The record of the L.M.S. is a noble one. I am glad to know that the Society retains that "forward thrust" which has ever characterised its genius. As Mr. Chirgwin rightly emphasises, there is need for consolidation, but while so much of Africa remains unreached by the Evangel the necessity for consolidation must never deafen our ears to the glorious old call of "Forward!" It would be a great thing for the L.M.S. to advance to Ujiji, as Mr. Chirgwin suggests.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chirgwin does not confine his attention to the work of the L.M.S. missions. In his chapter on "The Conflict of Cultures," and elsewhere, he takes a wider sweep. And rightly, for the Christian Mission in Africa cannot be appreciated to-day without consideration of the many urgent questions that arise from the inflooding tide of European civilisation.

Stretching from Cape Town in the south, to the confines of Abyssinia in the north, there is a high plateau, averaging over 4,000 feet above sea-level, which is to a large degree healthy and suitable for European colonisation. It differs in this respect from the margins of the continent and from the western lands—the Belgian Congo, Nigeria, etc. This vast tableland has passed almost in its entirety under British rule. All the L.M.S. stations in Africa are situated within its borders. Mr. Chirgwin states that for twenty-four years there has been no death on the L.M.S. Staff in Central Africa, and that all the missionaries (save the new-comers) have served over twenty years, and some over thirty. This fact illustrates the possibility of white settlement, for if missionaries can live there so can other Europeans. The southern part of the plateau—up to the Zambezi—is already so peopled by Europeans that it is confidently claimed to be a white man's country. The influx into the northern regions has already reached considerable proportions—there is now a European population of about 25,000. This will increase more or less rapidly. What are to be the relations between the settlers and the Africans in this area? That is a question that increasingly gives concern to thinking men. They do not want to see repeated there the mistakes that

INTRODUCTION

have been made in South Africa—in regard to land, for example. The conditions that have made possible the present most lamentable state of affairs in the Union are coming into being also in the North—in some parts they exist already. Unless, before things get worse, some equitable policy, based on Christian principles, is adopted in East Africa, it will be a bad look-out for the Africans. Fortunately, the men in authority are alive to the dangers of the present situation. We must use all our influence in their support.

The task of making Africa a province of the Kingdom of God is a great one—greater than perhaps our fathers thought. It calls not for warm hearts only, though these are always needed. It calls also for clear thinking—for wise and resolute effort. If ever there was a day for amateurs, that day is past. The men and women who go to Africa need more specialised training, so that they may train the African leaders upon whom the future chiefly depends. And we at home must study the situation seriously, so that our enthusiasm may be informed by knowledge and we may give more intelligent support to those who represent us on the field. Such books as Mr. Chirgwin's will help us in our studies. I rejoice that he has written it; I trust that it will have a very wide circulation, and will accomplish all that he desires.

EDWIN W. SMITH.

JUNE 6TH, 1927.

THE FORWARD TREAD

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE CAPE TO TANGANYIKA

AFRICA is a Continent of villages, and if you would find the real African you must seek him not in the Europeanised cities, but out on the tawny-coloured veld or in the limitless forests of the interior.

As you approach one of Africa's innumerable villages you will probably be met at the entrance by a man who, after giving you greeting, will lead you to the *Kgotla*, or place of tribal assembly, where the Chief is sitting before a fire with the headmen of the village squatting in a semi-circle in front of him. With characteristic Bantu politeness they will place a low wooden stool for you near the Chief. Conversation will move easily over the usual topics, and may go on interminably, for the African loves nothing more than talk. He is a good talker, too. There is a lot of shrewd wisdom in what he says, and he has a wonderful sense of the value of words in his own quite beautiful and very expressive language!

THE FORWARD TREAD

In the unhurried fashion of Africa, where there is always abundance of time, you will gradually lead the conversation on to the main purpose of your visit. It would violate native etiquette to come quickly to the point, and the Bantu attaches great importance to all the details of correct behaviour. At length you will intimate that you have come to ask whether the Chief and his councillors would care to have a teacher sent to the village. The subject obviously interests them, but no one will speak until the Chief has said his word. Seated on a low stool under an ancient tree in the middle of the *Kgotla*, he addresses the general company with some eloquence about the proposal; but he carefully refrains from any expression of his own personal opinion on the matter. For the real rulers of the Bantu tribes are not the chiefs or head-men, but the court of councillors, or elder men, who advise the chief. The chief, or head-man, is hardly more than chairman of a family council. Accordingly as soon as the Chief ceases, first one and then another of the village elders will speak. One will be definitely opposed to the innovation for it is not in accordance with custom; another will hold that a school is unnecessary for the boys will be needed at the cattle-posts, while the girls are better without education; another, however, will plead that it will give them prestige in the eyes of other villages. This is a real point, and several will emphasise it, for local pride and local loyalty are very intense in Bantu Africa. After more talk, the Chief will strike the ground with his stick as a sign that he wishes to speak. His speech will be scarcely more than a summing up of what the majority of the head-men have urged. It is in that

FROM THE CAPE TO TANGANYIKA

way that Bantu Africa is really ruled. The council of elders give their advice, and the Chief, or head-man, sums up what they say, and proclaims this as his own orders. In this way everyone is pleased.

Conditions of a somewhat similar kind may be found almost anywhere between the Cape and the Great Lakes. A certain type of life and culture is common to all Bantu tribes. Darkish chocolate in colour, erect and dignified in bearing, somewhat slight in build, they have the characteristic, kinky hair and thick lips of the African. But they are not Negroes; the Negroes live for the most part North of the Equator, and their chief centres of population are in West Africa. The 50,000,000 Bantu of modern Africa are the descendants of people who, centuries back, lived in the neighbourhood of the Great Lakes, and had affinity with the Negro and Hamitic stocks. Impelled by some urge, probably that of famine or population pressure, they swarmed down the Great Rift Valley, crossed the Zambezi, and driving the earlier inhabitants before them, they thrust forward in several mighty streams. A vigorous and virile people, they spread their culture from the Equator to the Cape, and either cowed the aboriginal Bushmen and Hottentots into serfdom, or assimilated them by inter-marriage.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the Bantu is their system of languages. These languages are extraordinarily rich and flexible, and far more elaborate than the simple life and needs of the people would require. Such a fact cannot be purposeless, and perhaps Africa will one day make its supreme contribution to the life of mankind by way of language.

THE FORWARD TREAD

If the Bantu have failed to achieve great things in the direction of art or architecture, they have made up for it on the side of speech, where they have perfected an instrument of which no people need be ashamed—an instrument that is scientific in construction, elastic in usage, able to express a thousand fine distinctions and capable of being attuned to all the requirements of civilised life.

It is often said that the native in tribal life is an unsavoury person, while in the towns he is bumptious and spoilt. It is certainly true that the African is a creature of emotions and impulses, callous and deceitful, childishly vain, and singularly lacking in originality, yet he has distinct capacity as a cattleman, an amazing faculty for imitation, and also for learning by doing; he has an unusually good memory, and picks up new languages with astonishing facility; he is a born orator, and something of a logician; he has a limitless store of loyalty, laughter and good fellowship, an infinite capacity for forgiveness and a genius for religion.

Some would brush aside all such arguments, and loudly assert that the African is only a benighted heathen, without the slightest notion of anything except his bodily wants; that he isn't a soul but just a stomach. But those who have the most intimate knowledge of the Bantu affirm that the African is supremely worth winning for the Kingdom, and that his already developed religious sense shows his capacity for Christianity. For instance, the sharp distinction between the secular and the sacred, to which the European is accustomed, is unknown to him. For him almost everything in the social life of the people has

some religious significance. He has a much stronger sense of the community than of the individual; and he believes that the greater part of the community—its most potent part—is made up of the ancestors, who are no more dead than he is. Any wrong done to the individual is regarded as a wrong done to the whole community, visible and invisible; it is not merely a crime, it is a sin. The tribe is thus a religious as well as a political organisation; it is bound together by the worship of common ancestors, and by belief in a common origin. If it were not for the conviction that the ancestors are alive and active, tribalism would long ago have broken down. Since the ancestors still live, very few ever presume to digress from the old ways. The effect of this has been to crush independence and initiative, and the solid conservatism thus created has been again and again a hindrance to the advance of Christianity, but it has made for tribal cohesion and loyalty, which are of the first importance to primitive people. The tribal aim is not to move forward but to keep the old ways; its golden age is not in the future but in the past.

Religiously the African is an animist and an ancestor worshipper. He profoundly believes in a spirit-world. He holds that in every man is a kind of spirit-duplicate, or soul, which at death slips out between the teeth and lives on; in every tree a tiny spirit-tree; in every animal, or rock, a spirit-double. The Bantu regards many of these ghostly or spiritual existences as malignant. He, therefore, goes in daily dread. He is convinced that the emancipated spirits of his ancestors, or relatives, are just waiting to avenge some imaginary neglect, and are ready at the first opportunity to injure

THE FORWARD TREAD

those they once loved. It is only natural, under such circumstances, that the African's continual desire should be to appease these spirits, or to turn aside their evil intent.

He believes that the spirits haunt every hole, lurk behind every tree, hover over every ford, and shudder in every storm. He sees his friend wade into the river at the ford, and before his eyes the man is sucked down to death. He argues that only the spirits could have done it! He watches a dozen of his tribesmen plunge into the forest, but only ten return; surely the spirits carried off the other two! No African ever believes that a man dies naturally; he holds that there must always be foul play either by human or by spirit agencies.

It is possible, so the Bantu believe, not merely to appease the spirits and avert their evil intent, but even to control them by the exercise of certain magical constraints. The witch-doctor, or medicine-man, who can thus control the spirits and have them at his beck and call, is the most feared man in the community. He lives apart, in a hut alone, where he mixes his condiments, repeats his incantations, and traffics with the spirit-world. It is always possible to recognise him for he dresses as no other in the tribe. He wears a fur cap, generally bedecked with feathers, and a cluster of gall-bladders and buck-horns, animals' teeth, and scraps of human hair dangle from his neck, while round his waist is a python skin. He is the village bogey-man. He belongs to a class whose hold on Bantu life is doubtless lessening, but is still very powerful in many parts. So long as the Bantu go in fear of evil-disposed spirits the witch-doctor will be a power

FROM THE CAPE TO TANGANYIKA

in the land. Formerly witchcraft took such a toll of human life that it had as much effect as war in keeping down the growth of the population of Africa, but British rule and Christian teaching have almost ended this practice.

It would be quite unfair to dismiss these notions as just superstition, and to say that the African is merely in terror of evil spirits, and that he is not really religious at all. Judged by the possession of a real religious sense the African compares favourably with the European. For instance, there is nothing of which the Bantu are more sure than that a spirit-world exists. In that land of shades men's spirits live on, their new life being a shadowy continuation of their life on earth; they do much the same things and have much the same needs. These ancestors are the tutelary deities, and almost the mediatorial saints of the tribe, even though in life their deeds would not stand examination.

It is possible to live amongst the native people for years and find no evidence of religious notions or religious practices, while all the time a most elaborate system is in vogue. Africans, in common with other primitive peoples, do not lay bare their inmost beliefs to travellers. No man more dislikes being laughed at than the African, and on no point is he more sensitive to ridicule than when it is at the expense of his religious notions. When an African is questioned he may not give precisely accurate replies, sometimes because he resents inquiry into his most sacred concerns, and sometimes because, with his polite desire to please, he gives the answer that he believes the questioner would like to receive!

THE FORWARD TREAD

In recent years a vast amount of research has been undertaken by careful observers which has upset many widely-held notions. For a long time it was generally held that the Bantu believed in the existence of myriads of malignant spirits, but had no idea of a Supreme Being. That view is no longer tenable. Perhaps the most important result of recent research is that the Bantu believe that a God above and beyond the spirits exist; they regard Him as remote from human life, and as much less operative than the spirits which crowd a man on every side; and they so firmly believe in His existence that they occasionally offer prayer and worship to Him. The Bechuana not only recognise *badimo*, i.e., the multitude of spirits that exist everywhere, but also *Modimo oa medimo*, i.e. the God of Gods. The Ba-ila of Northern Rhodesia, call this Supreme God, "Leza," and speak of Him as "The Creator," "The Moulder," "The Guardian," "The Giver," and "He from Whom all things come." It would seem clear that even in the "Dark Continent"—as it used to be called—God has not left Himself without witness. The Bantu have a certain consciousness of God; they may believe Him to be remote, but they believe Him to be. Clearly Africa's supreme need is for those who will teach her that this "unknown God" Whom she worships is fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

I WILL go anywhere provided it be forward," wrote David Livingstone in words that precisely embodied his dauntless spirit. Probably no sentence could more fitly express the outstanding characteristic of L.M.S. work in Africa. It has been pre-eminently the Society with the forward thrust. Its genius has been to pioneer, to open up new fields, and to press forward to the places where the need was greatest. Moffat's statement about "the vast unoccupied district to the North, where, on a clear morning I have seen the smoke of a thousand villages, and no missionary has ever been," was the lure that led Livingstone, "the man with the forward tread," to his untiring service. From the first the L.M.S. has shown evidence of a Christian land-hunger, a thirst for new territory, an onward stride into the unoccupied lands.

The L.M.S. was founded in 1795, and within three years Dr. Vanderkemp, its first missionary to Africa, boarded a convict ship bound for the Cape.

Vanderkemp was no ordinary man. Scientist and physician, linguist and scholar, he won for the L.M.S. the honour of being the pioneer British Missionary Society in the Continent of Africa. On his arrival this gifted man gave himself to unremitting service among

THE FORWARD TREAD

the despised Hottentots. But for his championship of their rights, and the vitalising message that he brought, these people, in common with so many other backward races, would simply have been wiped out. It was his task, he felt, to seek the lowest and the lost, and of the Hottentots he said, "I should not hesitate to offer my life for the least child among them." That was the spirit of the man who secured for the L.M.S. a foothold in Cape Colony.

(a) *The Northward Trek*.—With Vanderkemp's work as a starting point, Moffat strode Northwards across the Orange River, for he had conceived the daring project of preaching Christ to Afrikaner, the outlaw Chief and terror of the veld, whose name men spoke in whispers around their outspan camps at night. When it was reported that young Moffat was going unarmed to his kraal men told him that the dreaded Chief would make a drum of his skin, and a drinking-cup of his skull. But Moffat was not to be daunted, and in twelve months he trekked back to Cape Town in company with Afrikaner, now a peace-loving Christian, and presented him, though still with a price upon his head, to the Governor of the Colony.

Moffat did not return to Afrikaner's kraal, in Namaqualand, but drove his bullock-wagon over the sun-scorched wastes and through the sandy drifts into Bechuanaland to open up another vast country to the Good News. Here he founded the historic Mission-Station of Kuruman, and cultivated, in the midst of the boundless veld, the loveliest of gardens. Literally he made the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. In a few years' time Livingstone joined him, and at once began to thrust the frontiers of Christ's Kingdom

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

still further Northwards, fighting for every inch of the ground till he reached Lake Ngami, a thousand miles from the Cape. Ten years later (1859) Moffat, now an old man, led a little company of missionaries beyond Bechuanaland, a three-months' trek, into the country of Moselikatse, the Matabele king. It was a dramatic moment. In the vast *Kgotla* the dreaded Matabele warriors stood or sat in a great semi-circle around their tyrant-chief, whose very name struck terror into every heart; and into their midst marched the little company of missionaries, the first white men to settle permanently in what is now called Southern Rhodesia, and the first messengers of Christ to the untamed Matabele. Thus in sixty years the Gospel had been carried from Cape Town to the Zambezi.

But even then the onward thrust did not cease, for in another twenty years the Central Africa Mission had been established. The news was flashed through England, in 1873, that Livingstone had been found dead upon his knees at Old Chitambo. Everywhere men recalled his words to the undergraduates at Cambridge: "Do you carry on the work which I have begun. I leave it with you." At once plans were made, and in 1877 half-a-dozen men reached Zanzibar with instructions from the L.M.S. to establish a Mission Station at Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika. A thousand difficulties beset their way, and after fourteen months they were not half-way to the Lake. First one and then another succumbed to fever. But their places were quickly filled. Within seven years of the start ten had died and ten others had been invalided home, sick and broken men. The Mission to Central Africa was established at the cost of blood. No continent has

THE FORWARD TREAD

taken a heavier toll as the price of Christian penetration. But there was no thought of retirement. As one man fell another came to take his place, and within ten years of Livingstone's death a permanent foothold had been gained, and a missionary ship was sailing on the waters of Lake Tanganyika. The frontiers of Christ's Kingdom had in eighty years been thrust forward from Table Mountain to the shores of Tanganyika. It was a stupendous achievement! Had pioneering on such a vast and rapid scale ever before been undertaken?

In this inland trek progress was not made easily; perhaps its chief characteristic is the perseverance of the men who would not give in. Attempt after attempt had to be launched before a foothold was gained. When David Livingstone discovered Lake Ngami, in 1849, the first Christian wave beat upon that shore. In the years that followed the tide ebbed and flowed; wave after Christian wave broke in upon the pagan life of the people of the Lake, only to be hurled back again and yet again. But the Christian forces refused to acknowledge defeat. After Livingstone there followed Hepburn, then years later Wookey, still later Shomolekae; Cullen Reed; then Andrew Kgaša, an African minister, held the fort,* until, in 1926, a young missionary went out to establish a permanent station there. To-day, Lake Ngami is an outpost from which the Christian forces are thrusting out into the marshes and desert around. In this way, struggling for every foot of the land, the L.M.S. has pressed forward, and is doing so still.

Another aspect of this ceaseless thrust Northwards was the cost to life at which it was carried out. In

* For a fuller account see *Beyond the Great Thirst Land*.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

July, 1859, Helmore and Price, with their wives and children, set out from Cape Town to cross the Zambezi, and begin work among the Makololo. After the weary journey of two thousand miles, they pitched their camp on the low-lying ground near the Chief's kraal. Within a week fever attacked them. On March 7th of the next year one of the children died, on the 9th another, on the 11th a third; on the 12th Mrs. Helmore passed away; in April Helmore himself; in July Mrs. Price. "All these," wrote Roger Price, "I wrapped up and consigned coffinless to the tomb with my own hands," and then, racked with fever himself, and accompanied by the two remaining Helmore children, he stumbled back to Kuruman. Scarcely could a missionary enterprise have opened more disastrously.*

Nothing can speak more eloquently of the price that the pioneers paid than the lonely, scattered graves on hill-top or amid the bush. Here a simple wooden cross, somewhat neglected, marks the grave of a missionary's child; there a more durable monument shows where Livingstone laid his wife "anent Shupanga's brae," while in the wildness of the hills overlooking Tanganyika's blue, shining water, the soil is made sacred by the graves of the men who never reached the place towards which they had set their faces.

(b) *Consolidation.*—In the meantime others had arrived to establish the work in the districts where the pioneers blazed the trail. Institutions for training Africans for the ministry and for leadership in the native Church arose at Kuruman and Hankey. But

* This expedition was not a waste of life and toil. It opened the country the Paris Missionary Society afterwards entered. Coillard always spoke of Price as his forerunner.

THE FORWARD TREAD

modern South Africa was emerging; the country was becoming the Mecca of fortune-hunters seeking its diamonds and gold, and the native was being driven from the land of his fathers. The result was that the missionaries were forced into the position of exponents of the idea of trusteeship as against that of exploitation. Two names stand out among a goodly company in this connection—Philip and Mackenzie.

Dr. Philip was the Society's general superintendent in South Africa from 1820 to 1850, and incurred the opposition of the colonists for his tireless advocacy of native rights. In supporting the policy of native development he urged that the native was a consumer as well as a labourer, that by uplifting him new wants and, therefore, new markets would be created, and that this policy, morally sound, would also prove to be economically sound. He also put forward a policy of territorial segregation, according to which South Africa was to be divided into separate areas for Europeans and for Africans. His proposals, bitterly opposed at the time as pro-native, have now been carried out with a great measure of success in the Transkei, Basutoland, and elsewhere, and his policy is to-day being vindicated. Had his advice been followed eighty years ago South Africa would not now be half serf, half free.

As a young man, John Mackenzie, or "The Lion" as the natives called him, had prayed, "O Lord, send me to the darkest spot on earth." A fearless and far-seeing man, he had not been long in South Africa before he saw the significance of the incoming stream of Europeans. He realised that for the native people it meant the break-down of tribalism, the alienation

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

of land, and a score of attendant iniquities. Almost alone he placed himself between unscrupulous concession-hunters and the native peoples, and by his efforts Bechuanaland was saved for its own people. It is true of Africa, as Kipling said, that—

“ Her pagan beauty drew
Christian gentlemen a few
Hotly to attend her.”

(c) *Championship of Native Rights*.—All through the long decades of its service in Africa, the L.M.S., in its attempt to serve Christ in the service of the African, has championed the rights of the native peoples. This was so partly because the earliest missionaries found themselves forced by circumstances to become the protectors of the native against unscrupulous oppression. The majority of the white colonists in the Cape held it as an article of their faith that the native peoples, whether Bantu, Hottentots or Bushmen, were less than human: “ baboons and dogs,” whose colour sufficiently indicated the curse of God that rested upon them. It was, therefore, only right to make them slaves, to thrash and shoot them, and to treat them as beasts. The attitude of the time may be gauged, perhaps, from an incident in the life of Robert Moffat. On one of his journeys the young missionary called at a Dutch farm, where he was asked to conduct a service. Before the service began Moffat requested that the native servants might be shown in. The farmer contemptuously objected to having “ the baboons and dogs ” present for prayers! Without more ado Moffat took up the Bible and began the service, reading as the lesson the story of the Syro-

THE FORWARD TREAD

Phœnician woman. When he got to the words, "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master table." "Stop!" cried the farmer and sent for the Hottentots. "Young man," he said afterwards, "you took a hard hammer, and you have broken a hard head." In a letter of Dr. Philip to the Directors, in 1820, he tells of a lady "who resides in the neighbourhood, who informed me that she had seen a Hottentot servant in my family reading the Bible; that she hoped I would take the Bible from her, and that I would beat her with a stick the next time I found her with a Bible."

It is not surprising that under such a *régime* some of the natives harboured a bitter hatred against the white man, while others were cowed and broken in spirit. The sheer facts of the situation threw the missionaries into opposition to many of the colonists and the natives came to regard missionaries as their natural protectors. This goes a long way to explain the traditional attitude of the white colonist towards the missionary. In 1809 the Government Commissioner, charged with the regulation of native affairs, pressed upon Vanderkemp an impossible demand.

"Will you, sir," he asked, "agree to send over to Uitenhage Hottentots whose services may be required by the magistrate, Major Cuyler?" Vanderkemp promptly refused, and on being asked why, said, "That to apprehend men as prisoners, and force them to labour in the manner proposed, was no part of his duty." To a question, "Whether he did not consider it his duty to compel the Hottentots," he replied, "No, sir, the Hottentots are recognised to be a free people, and the colonists have no more right to force them

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

to labour in the way you propose then you have to sell them as slaves." Being asked if he would prohibit Kaffirs from visiting his institution, and whether he would send any who came as prisoners to Uitenhage; he replied, " Sir, my commission is to preach the Gospel to every one who chooses to hear me. God has sent me, not to put chains upon the legs of Hottentots and Kaffirs, but to preach liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound."

Service so unstinted, and pioneering over so vast an area, has won for the L.M.S. a great name in Bantu Africa. No Society has more honourable traditions. Its missionaries were the pioneers for Christ to a score of tribes where to-day others have come in to share the service.

(d) *Our area to-day.*—The L.M.S. did not attempt the impossible feat of holding all the land it opened up. For example, when the call came to thrust forward into Bechuanaland, the Society did not abandon its work in Namaqualand, but brought in the Wesleyans, who built on the foundations already laid; and later still, when the Europeans had come in numbers into the Cape, the Society relinquished the care of the native and coloured churches in order to be free to move all its stations north of the Orange River, and go where the need was greatest. The result is that to-day the most southerly point of L.M.S. activity is 700 miles from the Cape. The old Cape Colony work, organised in some ninety to a hundred coloured and native churches, is now being carried on with high-hearted courage by the South African Congregational Union.

(i) The present L.M.S. sphere in South Africa is in the shape of a vast triangle, which stands upon its apex

THE FORWARD TREAD

at Kuruman, and thrusts out its mighty sides north to Lake Ngami, and north-east to Hope Fountain. This vast area, more than twice as large as England and Wales, sprawls over the homelands of the Bechuana and Matabele peoples. Fifty years ago this was the back of beyond, reached only by tedious and dangerous travel. To-day the Cape to Cairo Railway, running like a great Roman road right through the L.M.S. area, 700 miles from Taungs to the Shangani Reserve, has made all the head-stations, except Lake Ngami, reasonably accessible.

In this vast parish the L.M.S. has to-day about twenty missionaries distributed over a dozen head-stations. These men have the superintendence of work at 247 out-stations, with the care of 46,000 Church members and adherents, 14,000 pupils in schools, as well as the supervision of 280 African pastors and teachers. Some five or six of these missionaries are engaged in educational work, and are of necessity rooted to one spot. The others have responsibility for enormous tracts. A man may have to undertake a journey of a month by ox-wagon to reach some remote out-station, and the population is so sparse that on the way he will scarcely pass through any native villages where he can preach Christ. Though the motor car is helping to solve the problem of distance, it yet remains true that itineration consumes much time and energy in this land of wide expanses and rolling veld. These district missionaries are charged with duties somewhat similar to those of a Moderator in the home-country. They preside at Church Councils, prepare, or examine candidates for Church-membership, adjudicate in cases of diffi-

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

culty or discipline, supervise elementary educational work, conduct examinations, undertake elementary medical work, encourage and assist the native Christian workers, as well as conduct services in the vernacular, and occasionally in English for the white residents.

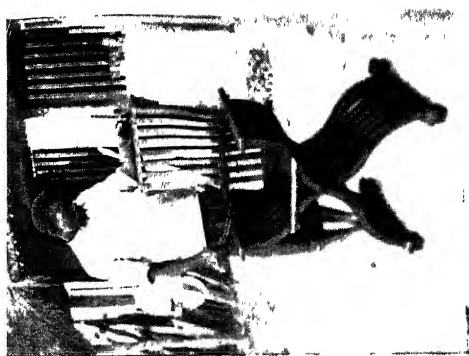
A dozen years ago work in South Africa was at the ox-wagon stage. That time is now rapidly passing. Once it took five days to go by ox-wagon from Kuruman to Tiger Kloof; to-day by motor, over the veld-track, it takes five hours! The railway and the motor have revolutionised missionary work and policy. What has been lost in colour and excitement has been gained in speed and safety. The missionary has become mobile; he can now supervise a much wider area; he can pay more frequent visits; he can keep in closer personal touch with both his African and his European colleagues; isolation, and the stagnation which follows in its train, have been largely abolished, and a more unified and corporate Church life can be fostered. But there have been losses, too. There is less time for quiet' and for thought, less opportunity for that unhurried conversation to which the African naturally responds, less chance of Christian fellowship at the out-span camps, or in the evening at the out-stations, where in the old days the night was spent. Sometimes one finds a missionary who wonders if the old days were not good days after all for the purposes of Christ.

To-day in Bechuanaland there is work of three kinds, or at three levels of development. Lake Ngami is an outpost, where Christian work is but little beyond the pioneering stage. The missionary still itinerates by means of an ox-wagon, and native leadership has scarcely begun to show itself. The second stage is

THE FORWARD TREAD

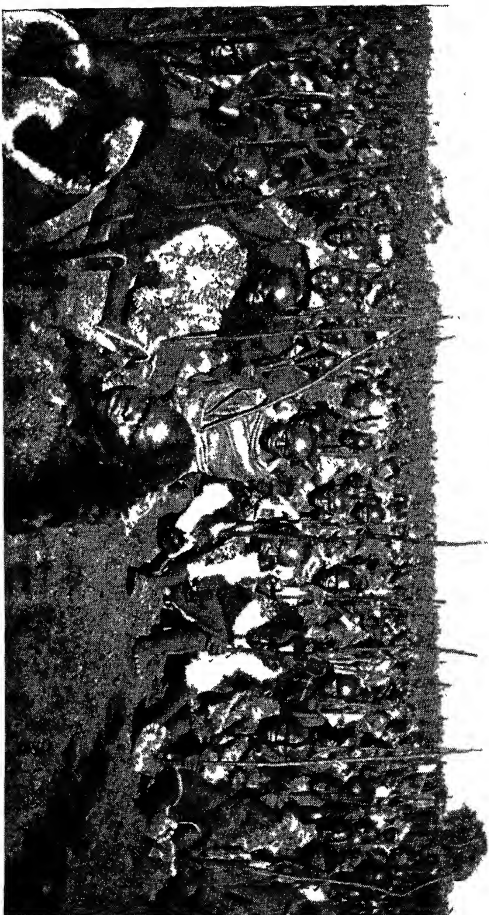
seen at Serowe (Khama's Town) where there is a strong Christian community, and where the Christian Church is the biggest building in the place. Dotted over the country round Serowe are a great number of outstations, with teacher-evangelists in charge, while in the town itself are schools, considerable and varied Christian activity, and real indications that native Christian leadership is emerging. The third stage is represented by Tiger Kloof, which is the heart of all the Bechuana work. In 1904, when W. C. Willoughby outspanned his oxen and pitched his tent, it was just open veld without a sign of human habitation. As he sat that night over the camp fire he dreamed a dream which in the succeeding years he wrought out in stones and students. To-day on that open veld there stands the finest set of buildings devoted to the task of native education to be found in South Africa, with a community of about four hundred people engaged in the enthralling enterprise of the education of Africans for the arts and crafts of life, and for Christian leadership in their tribe.

In the fight for Bechuanaland the struggle has been, and still is, mainly with drought and desert, with superstition and sorcery. On the whole the Bechuana have been ready to listen. Not so the fierce Matabele. In few places has soil seemed more sterile. Thirty-four years after Moffat and his colleagues entered the *kgotla* of Moselikatse, his son Lobengula, in a mad frenzy razed every building to the ground and destroyed the work of years. Three years later every missionary station was once more a heap of smoking ruins. But when the storm had passed work was quickly begun again, and before long the Christian frontiers were being pushed forward until the great native reserves



A CENTRAL AFRICAN CARPENTER
HIS HANDIWORK





BOYS AT THE INITIATION CEREMONIES
(See Chapter 5).

ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEERS

at Gwaai and Shangani had been penetrated. L.M.S. enterprise in Mataberland to-day ranges from purely pioneer work in the Shangani Reserve to the stimulating and varied educational, industrial and evangelistic work that centres in Hope Fountain and Inyati.

(ii) Our field in that part of Central Africa, in which the L.M.S. is the only Society at work, covers an area of 20,000 square miles, or more than twice as large as Wales. Since there are no roads, in our sense of the term, in the whole area, the field is much vaster than mere size would indicate. The problem of Central Africa is the problem of communications. From Mbereshi to Mpolokoso is a journey of five days, to Kambole nine days, to Kawimbe twelve days. Often a bicycle can be used, and here and there a motor-cycle, but for the most part travel is still undertaken as in the pioneer days by porters marching single file along the tracks through the forest or the "long grass", which often reaches to ten or twelve feet in height. Such travel is tedious, for eighteen to twenty miles a day is a good average; nor is it without its dangers from lions and other wild animals.

A generation ago this was a slave-driven, spectre-ridden land. To-day schools and hospitals, Christian homes and Churches, vernacular Testaments and native preachers are found in places where but yesterday animism and witchcraft, raiding and lust held undisputed sway. A dozen missionaries, including four educational, one medical and one agricultural, have the task of evangelising this vast area. There are 2,500 Church-members, and more than 16,000 adherents. Many of these have only a very slight understanding of the Christian message; yet numbers

THE FORWARD TREAD

of them will walk many miles on the Saturday in order to be present at worship in the village on the Sunday. While there are sixteen ordained African ministers in our South Africa Mission, up to the present we have none in Central Africa, yet there is a great company of preachers who proclaim the Good News in the scattered villages of the district. In addition we have more than 11,000 boys and girls in schools which range from the simplest bush school where a native teacher, himself scarcely beyond Standard II, is pluckily trying to teach a little handful of almost naked children, to the Mbereshi Girls' Boarding School, acknowledged on all hands to be a model of its kind, where more than 100 girls are receiving an equipment for Christian life in a Bantu village, probably better than they could get anywhere else in Central Africa. More than 400 African teacher-evangelists share in this wide-ranging service. They may not all be scholars, but they are all Christians, and every child they teach to read can, at any rate, read the Gospels.

It is not yet day, but the night is going. The freedom of Central Africa has been bought at a great price. Lives have been freely given. But it has not been without avail. The Mambwe, Lungu and Bemba peoples have the Gospel preached to them.

For 130 years the L.M.S. has been on trek in Africa. Like Livingstone, its characteristic has been "the forward tread." In this it has but been following the lure of its Lord. "Footprints—*pada*—are common objects of reverence in Eastern religions, but they are set side by side, as of one standing. The footprints of Jesus go on before and lead the way".*

* *Forces of the Spirit*, by F. Lenwood, p. 167

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

(a) *The contact of Black and White.*—The conflict of black and white cultures dates from the day when Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape, in 1652, with instructions to establish a half-way house or port of call for the ships of the Dutch East India Company. The Bushmen and Hottentots were not able to stem this new tide of civilisation that began to flow in upon their shores. With the Bantu tribes it was different. They fought with all their force to check this alien invasion, and even to hurl it back into the sea. They saw that the two cultures were so different that there could be no truce between them. Hence, with stroke after hammer stroke they pounded Boer and Briton alike. But the white man continued to advance. And from the moment that diamonds and gold were discovered, he determined to claim South Africa as a white man's land, and to maintain his position as the ruling caste.

The position was further complicated by the fact that amongst the white settlers there were differences in regard to native policy. The Dutch farmers, compact of hard commercialism and Calvinistic theology, bluntly affirmed in the Transvaal *Grondwet* or Constitution, that, "The people is determined to permit no equality between black and white in Church

THE FORWARD TREAD

or State," while the best British policy, largely moulded by missionaries, is enshrined in the phrase of Cecil Rhodes, "Equal rights for every civilised man."

(b) *The Problem of Land*.—On his arrival in Africa the white man found wide areas undeveloped and apparently unoccupied. Assuming these to be waste lands he pitched his tent and pegged out his claim. As his numbers increased his land-hunger grew, and the Africans soon found themselves being steadily ousted from their tribal lands.

What the white did not, or would not, understand, was that all habitable land in Africa is owned, but not by individuals. It belongs to the community as a whole, and not merely to the living members of the tribe, but to the past and future members also. It is the tribe's in perpetuity, and no man, not even the chief, has power to alienate it. From time immemorial the tenure has been tribal, and each individual who discharges his tribal duty is entitled to such land as may be necessary to his needs.

The white man's individualism simply undermined this Bantu notion of communal ownership. The chief, or headman, bewildered by the new conception, allowed the land to pass out of his possession, often without in the least understanding what he was doing, and quite unwittingly doing what he had no power to do. Not till it was too late did he find out that the white man had gained possession of the land once and for all. Often the land was simply taken without any semblance of a transaction, and the natives were just driven off. The general result is that to-day in many districts the native is a landless helot on the soil of his fathers. There is probably no more fruitful

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

cause of unrest in Africa, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the native question is the land question.

In the whole area of the Union of South Africa to-day:

1,500,000 white hold 240,000,000 acres.

4,750,000 Africans hold 27,000,000 acres.

In other words, while one quarter of the people enjoy nine-tenths of the land, threequarters of the people are squeezed up in the remaining one-tenth. Such facts are widely known and discussed among the Bantu, and it is easy to understand the remark of a member of a Bantu club in Johannesburg: "When the white man came to this country, he had the Bible, and we had the land: to-day we have the Bible and he has the land."

There can be no doubt that the Reserves, or areas in which no white man can hold land, are insufficient. According to Bantu ideas they are already overcrowded, while such an acknowledged authority as Professor Macmillan, of Johannesburg, declares unequivocally, "The native reserves are totally inadequate."* In these Reserves also the native population is increasing more rapidly than anywhere else in South Africa. In Basutoland, a native area, the population has grown four-fold in fifty years, while in the Transkei, owing to congestion, the land question is becoming more acute every year.

It is land that the Bantu yearns for. By nature he is a country man, a stockbreeder, and an agriculturist. To deprive him of land is to tear him away from his moorings, and to turn him adrift like a ship without

* *The Land, the Native and Unemployment.*

THE FORWARD TREAD

a rudder, in daily danger of drifting and even foundering. It is easy to see that this land question must have its effect upon Christian progress.

At one time the land all round Kuruman was owned by the tribe. The people were, according to native standards, comfortably off, and on becoming Christian they were able to support missionary work in their midst. Gradually they have been dispossessed, until to-day they have only a small reserve a considerable distance from the mission. By nature nomadic, the Bantu have migrated to other areas, and the Mission has a dwindling or retreating flock for which to care.

In another part of the L.M.S. field, a native headman and his people were removed by Government order from the area of their tribal lands on account of sleeping sickness. When permission was given to the people to return, the headman found that a white man was in possession, and it was only through the good offices of the local missionary that the headman and his people were given a new site near by.

(c) *The Problem of Labour*.—After land, perhaps the thorniest problem in Africa to-day is that of Labour. It would seem that two policies are being pursued. One is the policy of trusteeship, the other is exploitation. The latter ideal is an evil legacy from the slave-holding days.

When the Dutch came to the Cape and began to develop large farms they found a shortage of labour, and they took the disastrous step of introducing slaves. The result before long was the creation of a new problem—the poor white. Cheap labour is always bad labour, while slave labour is the worst possible. No people can introduce it into their economic life

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

and go scathless. As long ago as 1716, a South African Dutchman, named Van Imhoff, said, "I believe it would have been far better had we, when this colony was founded, commenced with Europeans, and brought them hither in such numbers that hunger and want would have forced them to work. But having imported slaves, every common or ordinary European becomes a gentleman, and prefers to be served than to serve . . . they consider it a shame to work with their own hands."

The whole of South Africa is infected by this spirit. All manual labour is contemptuously regarded as "Kaffir's work," the white man is consequently disinclined to do anything that is usually done by the native, and there has arisen a class of "poor-whites," untrained in skilled work and unwilling to do unskilled or "kaffir" work. It was estimated in 1922 that one-twelfth of the white population in the Union of South Africa belonged to this class.

Having learnt to rely upon cheap and plentiful black labour, the white man is now alarmed at the consequences of his own act. He is afraid of being swamped by sheer numbers—there are a quarter of a million non-Europeans in Johannesburg alone—afraid also of being ousted from the labour market by Africans who can maintain their industrial efficiency at a wage and amid conditions which would be impossible to white men. The physical virility of the Bantu, and their capacity for assimilating white civilisation, have produced a real alarm among the Europeans lest their culture shall be submerged and black men become the dominant race. "Maybe we are afraid," said General Hertzog to the Government Native Conference in

THE FORWARD TREAD

Pretoria on December 3rd, 1925, "and it may be that our policy is dictated by fear; be it so, but our fear is wisdom, for what we fear is a bad future." With that fear before him the white man has determined to bang and bolt the door in the face of the advancing African and to say "Thus far and no farther." The Colour Bar Act of 1926 attempts to keep the Bantu in a permanently inferior position in the labour world.

It is doubtful if any policy could be more short-sighted. The effect of the Colour Bar in industry is to limit the Africans to tasks that offer no scope, that develop no latent capacities, and that leave them inefficient because untrained. They are kept permanently below the best of which they are capable, and the whole country is the poorer. The industrial wastage thus caused is enormous. To keep a whole people permanently below their full capacity is as economically wasteful as it is ethically unsound. The attempt to build a state on a basis of slave-labour has always failed: and South Africa is proving to-day that the attempt to erect a state on a basis of divided and degraded labour carries within itself the seeds of its own undoing. The oppressor always pays a high price for his oppression, and the "poor white" to-day is just a parasite upon African society, as much to be pitied as the native whom he affects to despise. An industrial system that allocates employment on the basis not of capacity but of colour, is as economically unsound as it is morally indefensible.

A native lad of Christian parentage, finishes his course at Tiger Kloof as a fully-trained man, and as a member of the Christian Church. In search of employment he goes off to some big centre of European

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

life where his craftsmanship is likely to be in demand, only to find that all doors to skilled employment are closed against him. The pressure of need compels him to undertake casual employment, and gradually his pride in his craftsmanship gives way, and with it something of his self-respect. He finds that his work is regarded as without honour, that he is compelled to live in the unsavoury "native location," and that his industrial training at Tiger Kloof counts for nought. He puts up a stiff fight to remain loyal to his Christian ideals, but many in a like position are simply unable to do so.

The statement often made that the Bantu are lazy is less than half the truth, for all the heavy toil of the land is done by him. An African chief, after spending more than two months in London, stated that Londoners do not work. "They spend" he said, "all their time just walking about the streets!"* In both cases the statement shows a failure to understand the background of life. The African will work "like a nigger"—the very phrase is significant—but life has not accustomed him to long-continued toil. The call of the tribe is also so strong in him that when he is in white employ he is very apt to get home-sick and to return to his free native life again for a time. A contract is meaningless to him, and he does not see why he should not leave his employer when he tires of him or the task.

(d) *Taxation*.—The problem of labour is closely allied with that of taxation. In some cases taxation of the natives is openly urged as a means of driving them to work on the white man's plantations or in

* *Race Problems in the New Africa*, by W. C. Willoughby, p. 189.

THE FORWARD TREAD

the white man's mines. A former Governor of Kenya bluntly said, "We consider that taxation is the only possible method of compelling the native to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work."* However indefensible such an attitude may be, it is one frequently adopted in Africa to-day. Even where this is not the object in view, the very fact that a poll-tax or a hut-tax must be paid in cash compels the native to go in search of the kind of employment for which cash wages are paid. This has a deeply disturbing effect upon African tribal life, and plunges the African into the centres of white life and labour long before he is prepared for such an experience.

A Chibemba-speaking native of our Central Africa Mission finds that he has to pay a hut-tax within a limited period. There is hardly any alternative for him but to seek work in the great Katanga copper-mining area around Elizabethville, the Johannesburg of Central Africa. There he finds himself thrust into a completely new life. At first he is utterly bewildered, but with characteristic African adaptability he soon fits into his new environment, and before long finds himself possessed of what seems to him amazingly large wages. Utterly without experience in handling money, he spends foolishly and contracts all sorts of evil habits. Perhaps he may return to his village, pay his hut-tax and settle down to his normal life in the tribe for another year. It is more than likely that the glamour of the new life gets hold of him, and he sends word to his village that he is coming to marry the young girl who is betrothed to him. She is, perhaps, a Christian girl, educated in a L.M.S. school, with

* Quoted in *Kenya*, by Norman Leys, p. 186

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

desires after a pure home-life, and after being married according to Christian rites, they start off for their new life, in the mining centre, with high hopes. Their first letters to the missionary tell of the city and its strange ways, with here and there a shy reference to their attempt to follow the Great Chief in their home. Later letters, perhaps, say less of this, and after a time the letters stop altogether. The young couple have been sucked into the maelstrom of iniquity that always swirls in these Europeanised cities of Africa. With an aching heart the missionary realises that two more young folk have gone under. And the first operative cause was the white man's poll-tax.

(e) *Breakdown of Tribalism.*—Perhaps there is no more sinister process at work in the life of Africa to-day than that of tribal disintegration. It would seem that African tribalism and white civilisation are incompatible: the aggressive character of the one inevitably means the breakdown of the other. The mere presence of the white man has a disintegrating effect upon African life. Unthinking people often say that the missionary, by his preaching and teaching spoils the native, while the truth is that the very advent of the European has tended to divorce the African from his tribal life, and has not yet fitted him into the new life. On the whole the rural or "unspoiled" native is preferable to the town native, because the latter has been caught up in the rising tide of white civilisation and swept away from his moorings. Losing his tribal bearings he is at first bewildered and dazed, and then with his faculty for imitation he just copies the white man in a thousand details and often becomes ludicrous and undignified.

THE FORWARD TREAD

What can be more staggering to primitive people than a railway? It upsets all their previous notions; it brings new men and things into their midst; and it transports thousands of people, just emerging from savagery, and dumps them into the midst of some great industrial centre, where the last shreds of their tribalism are torn from them. Cities like Johannesburg, which has often been called the "University of Crime," lure the Africans away from their simple, rural homes and plunge them into the midst of new excitements, new temptations and new vices. This is the sort of education that spoils the native. No Bantu man or woman, boy or girl, who has lived in a great industrial centre can ever be the same again. Changes that European nations took decades, even centuries, to pass through, are for the African being crowded into a few years. What is the influence of a solitary missionary compared with such a staggering impact?

The alienation of ancestral lands also makes for de-tribalisation. An African tribe consists both of the living and the "dead," and the latter are indissolubly linked with the land. They hover around their old haunts and are literally the tutelary spirits of the place. To remove a people, therefore, from their tribal lands involves tearing up their religious roots, cutting them off from their ancestral spirits, rending the tribe in twain, and sundering the living from the dead. No giving of other lands as compensation can re-unite these dissevered groups. Native reserves, given in exchange for the ancestral lands, are alien territories for the spirits.

The compulsory removal of Bantu people from their

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

ancestral home, or the journeying of tribesmen great distances to work for the white man, has the effect of putting them beyond the reach of their deities. The ancestral spirits cannot move from place to place. Their writ does not run beyond the tribal lands. They cannot follow the migrating labourer who goes off to the mining camp or is removed to the white man's plantation. The latter finds himself outside the pale of his tribal gods, freed from all the sanctions of tribal faith, beyond the reach of the tribal taboos, literally a godless man. The very basis of tribal morality is shattered, and not only does moral disaster for the individual often follow, but a severe blow is struck at the whole fabric of the social and religious life of the tribe.

No lover of Africa will ever forget Khama's great fight to hold off the disintegrating influences of white civilisation until his people should be ready for such contact. With amazing foresight he saw that white civilisation had come to stay in Africa, and that sooner or later the advancing tide would sweep in across the life of Bechuanaland. He saw that African tribalism could not of itself resist the disintegrating effects of European life; there was only one thing to do, namely, to re-build the tribal life around a new and a Christian centre. It was the most far-seeing and courageous attempt ever made by an African. Tribalism was to remain, the people were to continue to be Bantu, but the pagan sanctions of their corporate life were to be replaced by Christian ones. In the place where his father lit the witch-doctor's fire, Khama built a Christian church; in place of the initiation-camps he put the swearing-in of lads to the tribe of Christ; instead of the sorcerer's aid in the tribal meeting-place

THE FORWARD TREAD

he began each day in the open *kgotla* with Christian prayer. He saw that it would take years to carry through his daring plan, and in the meantime many white men turned envious eyes upon the unexploited resources of Bechuanaland. But Khama held them off. He was fighting for time—time in which his people could find their feet in the new life, and take their stand in the new Africa that was coming. It was a unique situation; this black son of a sorcerer-chief pitting his strength against white jingoes and concession-hunters, standing as a breakwater in the path of the rising tide of white civilisation, in order that his people might have rest long enough to resist the process of tribal disintegration. For sixty years Khama did this, and rendered a service to his tribe that has never been surpassed by any African chief.

(f) *The Colour Bar*.—When on a visit to Africa in 1924, the L.M.S. Foreign Secretary wished to discuss certain matters with one of the secretaries of the Student Christian Association of South Africa, the Rev. Max Yergan, B.A. Mr. Yergan is of African descent, a graduate of Columbia University, an ordained minister, and in all respects a Christian gentleman. The only place in which these two could take counsel together regarding the affairs of Christ in Africa was the public gardens. After a discussion lasting two hours, Mr. Yergan was invited to take a cup of coffee but had to point out that on account of his colour there was no hotel or restaurant in Cape Town where such an act of common courtesy could take place.

Between the black and white races in Africa there yawns a great gulf of civilisation and culture, of creed and custom. The existence of these differences is not

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

itself an evil; the evil creeps in when they are made a pretext for arrogant treatment, or for an attempt to fetter defenceless people to a position of permanent inferiority, or for differential justice. Mr. W. C. Scully relates* that in 1919 two white ex-soldiers were convicted of robbing passengers in a train at Johannesburg. The magistrate, after commenting on their having served in France, passed sentence of £20, or three weeks. A week later a native was found pilfering railway property at Invani station. He had been three years with the Native Labour contingent in France. "This," said the magistrate, "only aggravates the offence," and the man was sentenced to four years' hard labour, and fifteen lashes. The native is naturally puzzled, and in a mood to be angry. As General Smuts has said, he has begun to lose faith in the white man.

The question inevitably arises, what is to be the future relation of the two races?

The policy of repression, or of "keeping the nigger in his place" is not only sub-Christian, it is also as practically unsound as it is morally deficient. There is no possibility of permanently repressing a vigorous and virile people, or setting bounds to the march of a race. The attempt to do so is like trying to cork up a volcano.

The policy of segregation, not merely means opposition to racial inter-marriage, but also the separation of the races in residence and recreation, in work and worship. Full and complete segregation no serious person advocates: it is an impossible proposal, and any attempt to carry it out logically would bring

* *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1919.

THE FORWARD TREAD

African life to a standstill. What is generally meant by segregation is some partial policy, or the application of what is often loosely referred to as the Colour Bar. Wherever the Colour Bar policy has been applied, however sympathetically, it has been a source of continual friction. In actual practice race-segregation spells race-discrimination, and for a Christian it is surely axiomatic that no man should be discriminated against because of something over which he has no control and can never alter, such as the colour of his skin, but only because of things which it is within his power to change, such as dirt or ignorance.

It may be desirable for a time, perhaps a long time, to keep races of widely differing cultural levels apart, and to reserve areas for the exclusive use of one or the other; it may even be well that in towns there should be native locations or quarters, for it is true, in Lafcadio Hearn's pregnant phrase, that "The East can underlive the West." But such a policy is not final. When a man of a coloured race has come to share the refinements, education, religion and general outlook of the white man, should not the barrier be removed? Rigidly to separate the races under such circumstances is to deprive both of the enrichment of mutual friendship and understanding. The policy of segregation would seem to be at best a temporary expedient. It is surely impossible in the present maelstrom of races to erect barriers. The peoples are, for better or worse, intermingled to-day, and the clock cannot now be put back.

The third policy is that of the Open Road and the Equal Chance. It proceeds upon the belief that the way through the inter-racial difficulty is by confidence

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

and co-operation, and it would seem to be a pre-supposition of the best British policy as enshrined in the phrase, "equal rights for all civilised men."

With the growth of civilisation there is growing up all over the world one single cultural environment common to all races. As advance is made towards this one common environment, racial development is quickened (as witness the amazing advance of Japan) and additional argument is forthcoming for the belief that all men are potentially equal, or at least that all alike share in a capacity for unlimited development. There are no necessarily and permanently superior (or inferior) races. Any policy that keeps races in subservience, or apart, is likely to stunt growth and to rob humanity of the special gifts which each race might bring into the common stock. It distorts the development of the weaker race, and involves the stronger in the sin of arrogance and contempt, coarsening its moral fibre and blunting the edge of its conscience. It seems to many that the only course open to the Christian is to remove every obstacle that hinders the advance of the Bantu, and to lend them every aid in their racial development. The only tolerable view of human beings is God's view; and in His sight men of whatever race are worth dying for. It would seem to follow that there can be no final refusal of power and opportunity on the ground of race, but that, on the contrary, every assistance should be given to the Bantu race so that they may reach the height of their possibility, and enter into relationships with the white race of mutual service and equal regard.

(g) *The Birth of Race-Consciousness*.—Race-consciousness is a quite modern thing. It was unknown

THE FORWARD TREAD

a century ago outside the white world. It seems as though the impact of white culture has stirred race-consciousness all the world over, and even the African is giving evidence of an emerging race-consciousness.

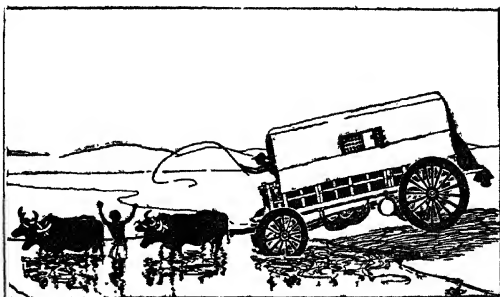
The European War did a great deal to foster this. Africans were brought into the struggle by both sides. Africans of varying tribes found themselves cheek by jowl in labour corps or fighting units, and for the first time many of them were able to look over the barriers of tribalism, and made the discovery that they were all members of one race. This same discovery has also been made by tens of thousands who are yearly thrust into each other's company, irrespective of tribe, in the great compounds of Johannesburg and elsewhere.

It is hardly possible to speak of race-movements amongst the Bantu. Africa as a whole has not yet attained the educational level necessary for the clear articulation of racial aspirations on any general scale. But if there are not well defined race-movements, there is a plethora of racial unrest and inchoate discontent. Africa has not yet to any extent produced indigenous leaders of calibre and ability who could be both the mouthpiece and the spear-head of this newly emerging racial consciousness. In the far-scattered villages there is little talk of race questions, though there is plenty of criticism of the white man, but in the great industrial centres it is a constant topic of embittered conversation. Ethiopianism, a movement partly religious and partly political, which has as its slogan "Africa for the Africans," is the outward expression of racial feeling. It shows itself in secessions from missionary churches, and perhaps more often in subterranean ways. African social life has from time

THE CONFLICT OF CULTURES

immemorial been honeycombed by secret societies, and racialism amongst the Bantu to-day naturally tends to run in underground channels, emerging in our Central Africa area as the Watch Tower Movement, in other places as "prophet movements" or as "Bantu Clubs."

Racialism in Africa is thus fed from a dozen sources, such as tribal disintegration, native grievances connected with the Colour Bar, the land question, the burden of taxation, the native locations, and other disabilities which the more civilised and better educated Bantu bitterly resent. This prevalent and Protean unrest has been increasingly running into the moulds of racialism. The Bantu is beginning to perceive in himself the arousal of a new and mighty thing. Many factors are conspiring to force upon him the realisation that he is not a hanger-on to white civilisation, but a member of a people with a destiny. The Africans are slowly achieving race-consciousness. A new race is being born.



CHAPTER FOUR

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

THE African is getting education whether we like it or not, and those who urge that it should be stopped are crying for the moon. Education, they say, is spoiling the native; it teaches him to be dishonest and cheeky, and it unfits him for the manual toil which is his appointed lot in life.

Precisely such arguments were used in England fifty years ago against the giving of education to all classes of the community, and they are destined to be as futile now as then. It is too late in the day to speak of stopping such a mighty process. The education of the African is going on all the time; it begins the very moment that black and white come into touch with one another; and every European in Africa to-day is willy-nilly, helping to educate the African for better or worse. We are all missionaries and educators now.

Those who object to a Bantu boy going to a mission school apparently have no objection to his going to work in a gold mine, or on a cotton plantation. Yet the latter is a far greater educational force in the life of Africa to-day. The raw Bantu is drawn away from his secluded village to join the unending stream of the quarter of a million Africans that flows through Johannesburg every year to work in the mines, where

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

he is being educated every day. With his faculty for imitation he soon picks up the white man's ways, his language, his manners, his vices, and something of his craftsmanship. He learns a good deal about the seamy side of town life. His tribal restraints cease to hold him. He hears the white man laugh at magic and witchcraft and ancestor-spirits, and notices that no disastrous consequences follow. It is only natural that his own tribal faith should break down, and that he should learn to swear and swagger with the best, or the worst. Unaccustomed to a celibate life, and being now without his women-folk, he takes to the ways of shame. When his term of service is over, he finds himself possessed of what seems fabulous wealth to him, much of which he spends recklessly in buying shoddy European clothes, perhaps a gramophone, or other such article, and with these, and the wreckage of his tribal morality, he returns to his kraal. The wit of man could not have devised an education more disturbing or revolutionary.*

The Bantu tribesman is not an uneducated man. Walk with him over the veld, and at every step he will surprise you. He will tell you that yesterday a Boer farmer trekked that way with two bullock wagons, one of them being heavily loaded with hides, that one of his oxen was lame in its fore-foot and one of his "boys" was a Zulu, while the farmer himself used a new type of German gun for shooting duiker. His observant eyes and his logical mind learn all this and much else from the tracks in the sand, from a scrap of raw hide left with a duiker's horn, a broken knob-

* It is only fair to say that many mine-workers return to their homes having learned to read and value the Bible.

THE FORWARD TREAD

kerrie near an out-span camp, and a cartridge picked up on the veld. Travel through the great forest-belt of Central Africa with him, and a broken twig, an animal's spoor, a frightened twittering of the birds, which your duller senses do not notice, will tell him many things; his bush-craft is a ceaseless wonder. He has also an elaborate etiquette, a social system, a belief in a spiritual world, a view of the universe, in fact a culture of his own. He is not an untutored savage.

Neither is the Bantu tribesman incapable of modern education. Not so long ago it was confidently asserted that the African could be educated up to a certain point, when mental saturation was reached, after which he could learn no more. This point was variously placed at twelve or fourteen or sixteen years of age. With a false show of learning, the reason was said to be that the sutures of the Bantu skull closed earlier than those of the white man. Scientific inquiry has disproved both the premises and the conclusion. Mental saturation is found to be caused, in Africa as in Europe, by squalor, under-nourishment and other removable causes; and as these causes are being removed an increasing number of Bantu are climbing to high rungs on the educational ladder. The African is neither untaught nor unteachable.

From the first, Missionary Societies have seen the necessity of educating the African as a way of providing leadership and enlightenment for the newly-planted Church. It was imperative that the Bantu converts should be able to read in order that they might have direct access to the Bible. The missionaries accordingly threw the door of education wide

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

open, and to-day there are Bantu who have passed from the primitive out-station school right through to the gaining of a University degree, and in all their course they have been under Christian influence, and taught by Christian teachers. This is an amazing achievement, especially when it is recalled that a century ago the Bantu had not so much as an alphabet!

Up till quite recently the only people who were consciously attempting the education of the African were missionaries; they have something like 2,000,000 African children in their schools, and they are giving nearly ninety per cent. of the education that the Bantu are receiving to-day. In Nyasaland every school is a mission school, while in Tanganyika Territory there are 5,000 children in Government schools, but 115,000 in mission schools. Turning to areas in which the L.M.S. is at work, we find that in Northern Rhodesia the Government has 600 children in its schools, and the missionary societies have 50,000; in Southern Rhodesia the Government is giving education to 250 native children; the missionary societies to 80,000, while in the Bechuanaland Protectorate every school is a mission school.* “The history of native education in South Africa is the history of South African Missions.”†

In all this wide educational service the L.M.S. takes a not unworthy share. One-quarter of the children attending school in Northern Rhodesia are in L.M.S. schools; 6,000 children in Southern Rhodesia are

* In various parts of British Africa the Government has in recent years assisted mission schools with grants-in-aid.

† *The Education of the South African Native*, by C. T. Loram.

THE FORWARD TREAD

being educated by the Society; fully three-quarters of the children receiving education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate are attending our own schools, while the L.M.S. has some 2,000 children in its schools in the Cape Province, not to mention the many schools connected with independent Churches that began as L.M.S. Stations. Altogether our Society is undertaking the education of some 25,000 Bantu.

The quality of this educational work is almost as remarkable as its extent. Of course there have been mistakes both in the content and in the method of education; and the keenest critics are the missionaries themselves. Often the subjects taught have been remote from African life, and the methods followed have been merely those of Europe or America transplanted to Africa. Dr. Jesse Jones, the foremost living authority on African education, says that "Missions have committed about the same proportion of errors as the Governments. . . . Each has brought the best they know in their home countries." The plain fact is that the results have been better than one had any right to expect.

Some time ago Rev. A. E. LeRoy, Principal of Amanzimtoti Institution in Natal, an American Congregationalist institution, set himself to find out what his ex-pupils were doing. He tabulated all the results, setting down exactly what their employers said about them. Here are a few taken at random:*

A (by name) "The best boy I've ever had; in fact have every confidence in him. Has been here six years."

* *S. A. Journal of Science*, January—February, 1919.

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

B (by name) "Steady, well-behaved and respectful always. One year."

C (by name) "Lazy, very lazy. Doesn't want to do too much work, but I've kept him on for two years. You know what it is—you get attached to them."

And so on for 185 cases investigated. The summary of records is worth noting:

0 as worthless;
7 as poor;
14 as fair;
80 as good;
56 as very good;
28 as excellent.

Mr. LeRoy asks, "Does it pay to educate the Native? The answer to the question is in the affirmative."

As we have seen, missionary societies are shouldering almost the whole of the burden of educating the African race. Obviously that cannot long continue. A few voluntary agencies, with strictly limited resources of men and money, cannot carry on the education of a Continent. To state but one difficulty, the task would call for more than half a million trained teachers! But happily there is no need for missionary societies to continue attempting the impossible, for Government, with all its power and resources, has now entered the field of education. At present education is in missionary hands; if it passes out of their direction other forces will mould Africa, and the missionary societies and all that they stand for will become a

THE FORWARD TREAD

backwater in the stream of Africa's life. Happily it is the definite desire of Governments to co-operate with missionary societies in all educational work.

New and hopeful things are happening. At home the Government has set up at the Colonial Office an Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa, which has stated in its official memorandum, *Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa*: "Since contact with civilisation—and even education itself—must necessarily tend to weaken tribal authority and the sanctions of existing beliefs, and in view of the all-prevailing belief in the supernatural, which affects the whole life of the African, it is essential that what is good in the old beliefs and sanctions should be strengthened, and what is defective should be replaced. The greatest importance must always be attached to religious teaching and moral instruction. Both in schools and in training colleges they should be accorded an equal standing with secular subjects."* The Government Commission on Native Education in Southern Rhodesia, after speaking about the great pioneering work of the L.M.S. in education in Southern Rhodesia, says: "It is our considered opinion that Christianity must be the basis in the future, as it has been in the past, of the natives' education."† The whole report reads like a missionary document! An entirely new factor in Africa to-day is the way in which Governments, and especially the British Government, have recognised that the only hope for the safe development of the African people through the next twenty-five years is that the Christian Church should be the

* H.M. Stationery Office. Cmd. 2374, p. 4.

† C.S.R. 20—1925, Salisbury, Rhodesia.

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

greatest constructive influence at work. Clearly the chief method by which an African Christian civilisation can be built up is by the Christian school, and it is beyond doubt that the effective Christian education of the Bantu must be provided in this generation, or the opportunity will be lost beyond recall. At present the door is open wide. The Governments desire the co-operation of missionary societies, and the Christian Church can do as much educational work in Africa as it can possibly undertake, and do it with Government backing, on the one condition that it is done well.

Has there ever been such an opportunity to place the stamp of Christ on a whole race as there is in Africa to-day?

Those who know Africa know that God meant the vast mass of the Bantu to be farmers, not clerks; men of the countryside, not of the town; and their real need, therefore, is not so much for book-learning as for education suited to their life and genius. In actual practice the education of primitive and backward races always tends to be too bookish. There are Bantu children in Africa to-day who know a good deal about the Norman conquest, and the geography of Europe, but little or nothing about their own land and people; who are familiar with the intricacies of parsing and analysis, but have no idea how to put a little variety into their monotonous meals. In their schools it was subjects, not boys and girls that were taught.

The story of negro education in America is full of help. Freedom from slavery left the negro with two firmly fixed ideas; first, that freedom from slavery means freedom from hard work and, second, that

THE FORWARD TREAD

education of the head freed them from all necessity to work with the hands. The result was that numbers of ex-slaves clamoured to study Latin and Greek, logic and Philosophy, while still living in squalor and misery. The fields were neglected, money was squandered on useless trumpery, the agitator and carpet-bagger were abroad in the land. To meet this situation Armstrong, the ex-general, and Booker Washington, the ex-slave, founded Hampton and Tuskegee Institutions, where negro students received an education that fitted them for the actual life that the majority of them would have to live. Every student was trained in some craft as well as given an intellectual equipment, and this in a strongly religious atmosphere, so that he went out trained in hands, head and heart.

Clearly education must fit the African for life in the village, and it must be given in a living way; that is, it must be linked on to the ordinary interests and activities of the people. It must not be so bookish as to divorce them from their homes and their cattle; rather it must get some skill into their fingers, some knowledge into their heads, and some character into their make-up so that they will be able and eager to lead their fellows into a larger and more abundant life. The Bantu, like the American negro, has an almost fatal confidence in book-learning, and tends to regard the thing done by the hands as of little importance compared with the thing learnt from a book. The girls in an African school recently refused to clean their dormitory because it was time for their class on hygiene!* Whereas in another place the boys were taken by their teacher to clear away a foul midden

* *International Review of Missions*, July, 1926, p. 502.

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

from near a sick man's hut, thereby learning a valuable lesson in service to others, as well as more about hygiene than they would have from an equal time spent with books.

What, then, is the L.M.S. share in the education of the Bantu?

The fact that every L.M.S. missionary in Africa is giving at least part time to educational work, and one in every three full time, is proof of the position education holds in the policy of the Society. Many of the schools are, of course, very primitive, and many of the teachers very ill-equipped.

The school building in a Central African out-station is just a hut, made native fashion of poles and clay, and thatched with grass. Inside is a little platform with a primitive desk, and a box containing slates, pencils, chalk, alphabet cards, primers and Gospels for reading-books, while the seats are just poles.

The school session begins at 7 a.m., when a drum beats and the children scamper off to the stream and splash water over themselves. Having been playing in the white dust many of them come to school with clean black faces and white, dusty bodies, relieved by black streaks where the water has run down. Most of them are dressed in a yard or so of cheap calico, the youngest of them in a few inches. The assistant teacher may have to go in search of several children, only to find that some of the girls went at sunrise with their mothers to their distant bush-gardens, and some of the boys with their fathers to hunt small antelopes. Still there are thirty-five children present to answer the roll-call, and after they have done a few simple physical exercises they march into school.

THE FORWARD TREAD

School begins with a hymn sung well, for the Bantu are musical, prayer is offered, and a Scripture lesson follows. This consists in a repetition of the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, or the Commandments, or a Psalm, or a few other verses of Scripture. If the teacher is not over zealous the Scripture teaching often goes no further than just memory work. If he is keen he attempts something more, and probably follows a regular course of lessons prepared with notes by the missionary.

The school is next divided into classes. Some repeat syllables written on a board; a higher class reads from the vernacular primer; half a dozen are reading from a Gospel or a book of Old Testament stories, or a translation of *Æsop's Fables*. Later they will take simple arithmetic, based on their own village needs, to help them to count and measure, to calculate wages, to buy at the stores, or to sell their own garden produce. The elder ones will then write on slates, while the younger write on the ground with their fingers, or with a small stick. After two hours the children are assembled again, another hymn is sung, and the school is dismissed until four o'clock in the afternoon, when they have another session.

The schools at head-stations, where a missionary lives, are naturally better organised and more efficient, and in many cases they carry the children up to Standard VI.

It is easy to see that the crux of the position is the teacher. It is often impossible for the missionary to visit the out-station more than once or twice a year, and the teacher is left to his own resources for months together. An earnest teacher is a powerfu

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

influence in the neighbourhood. He is respected for his knowledge, and treated with deference by the simple-hearted people. Drunkenness, obscene dancing and licentiousness rapidly diminish in his area; the fear of spirits is replaced by a growing knowledge of a Father-God; and a memorable sight is to see a proportion of the villagers assembling in the little school-chapel for morning prayers before beginning their day's duties.

The teacher is, therefore, a teacher-evangelist, and on Sunday he gathers the people together for worship, and also conducts a class for the instruction of those who have expressed a desire to learn of Christ.

There are some seven hundred such teacher-evangelists in connection with L.M.S. work in Africa to-day, and some two hundred schools roughly, similar to the one described. The teaching may often be slight and elementary, yet thousands of Bantu have been taught to read, and these unpretentious schools have been the real feeders of the Bantu Christian Church and the builders of the new Africa.

The next step up the Bantu education ladder is the Boarding School, to which the brightest of the children from the out-schools are sent. An example is the Girls' Boarding School at Mbereshi, which is admitted on all hands to be one of the best, if not the best, in Central Africa. The school is really a model village, for in the spacious compound ten or a dozen native houses of sun-dried brick are grouped around the courtyard, in the middle of which is the *nsaka* or circular grass roof supported on poles. This is the general meeting place, and is used by the girls as a

THE FORWARD TREAD

dining-room in wet weather. In this school-village one hundred girls live, and they live as nearly as possible an ordinary village life. They do the whole work of the compound, getting their own water and firewood, cooking their own food, and making their own clothes. One of the bigger girls is put in charge of each hut as a kind of house-mother. She is held responsible for the general behaviour and well-being of her family. She mends their clothes, nurses them in sickness, and in general receives an admirable training in mother-craft. Each little family spreads its meals on the ground outside its house, and eats native fashion from a common pot, and with the aid only of well-washed fingers. At night they do not use iron bedsteads, which they will not have in their future homes, but just grass mats laid on well-swept floors.

School hours are from 9 to 12.30. The usual subjects are taught, but always in relation to the needs of African village life. Singing and games, dancing and net-ball are included in the time-table. The dramatic gift of the African is turned to account, especially at times like Christmas. An attempt is made to conserve all that is good in native life and custom. There are prayers at sunrise and sunset, Scripture teaching every day in school, and once a week in the Sunday School, when the house-mothers are the teachers. The whole school-life centres round a devotional and intercessory service held every week for the elder girls and the "old girls" who live near.

At first the people, particularly the women, were prejudiced against the school, with its new notions and ways. But now they see that the girls, though educated, are not spoiled; that they are still Africar



PREPARING FOR THE EVENING MEAL AT INYATI



MBERESHI MODERN VILLAGE



GIRLS' BOARDING SCHOOL, MBERESHI



TIGER KLOOF

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

village girls, able to do the ordinary duties of village life, at least as well as others, and at the same time organise their homes on lines of simple purity and real religion. Now they see the fine sturdy, happy babies that some of the "old girls" have, instead of the poor, puny mites that girls who have married at fourteen have, they are content to leave their girls in school until they are sixteen, seventeen, even eighteen years old. They see sick children nursed and recovering, whereas in the village they might die; they see the girls clean, strong, healthy, and these things make their impression on the women, and it makes some of them eager for the new ways.*

But it does not end there. Follow-up work is done amongst the "old girls"; they are being more and more used as sowers of the seed, and ways are being opened up for regular work amongst women in the villages round.

Side by side with the Girls' Boarding School in Mbereshi, one for boys is growing up, so that from these two schools there may go out into the villages of Central Africa a stream of young men and women who, having lived for eight, or even ten years in a completely Christian environment, will become the builders of a new and better Africa.

In Southern Rhodesia a singularly happy and somewhat similar girls' Boarding School exists at Hope Fountain, where gardening and basketry, sewing and pottery, have a place in the curriculum, side by side with the three R's, simple geography, hygiene and Scripture. Here also the girls roll themselves in blankets and sleep on mats on the floor, but for meals

* *International Review of Missions*, October, 1925.

THE FORWARD TREAD

they sit at tables and use plates and spoons, etc., as these things are becoming more and more usual in native homes in Southern Rhodesia. The corresponding Boys' Boarding School is seventy miles away at Inyati, where special emphasis is laid upon industrial training, such as carpentry and agriculture, in order to prepare the Bantu for the new day that is coming to Africa.

The rungs in the ladder of Bantu education have so far been the out-school, the station-school, and the Boarding School. Most of the pupils go no further than this; indeed only the pick of them get to the Boarding School. Some, however, with special aptitudes or desires take further training. Perhaps they learn cabinet-making or brick-making at Mbereshi, where many a sideboard that now has a proud place in an official's parlour was made; perhaps they learn to grow cotton and coffee, or to make soap and build better homes at Kambole, becoming economically independent and morally robust in developing the resources of their country for themselves; perhaps they go to Tiger Kloof and serve their apprenticeship in tailoring or masonry, in tanning or joinery. Many a well-fitting suit in South Africa to-day was made in that tailor's shop; many of the desks now used in the village schools of Bechuanaland and prescribed by order of the Cape Administration, were made by the lads in the carpentry department. Indeed the great pile of Tiger Kloof buildings that never fail to impress every visitor, was built entirely by the lads in the building and joinery classes, who hewed the stone and sawed the rafters, raised the walls and reared the great roofs. They learnt to build by building.

GIVING THE BANTU A CHANCE

Perhaps some of the lads or girls have gifts for teaching. If so, after passing Standard VI they go to Tiger Kloof, where they are given a three-years' course in the Normal Department, and trained for the Cape Teachers' Certificate. It is these teachers, trained at Tiger Kloof, who, in increasing numbers and with increasing efficiency, staff the L.M.S. schools in South Africa. Every year about twenty young men and women, trained and certificated, pass out of Tiger Kloof to undertake this work.

Perhaps some young man seems specially fitted for the Ministry. It may be that as a boy in the out-school and later on in the Boarding School, he gave proof of character, or as a teacher-evangelist in a distant and difficult post he revealed unusual gifts of Christian leadership. His development has been watched by the missionary, and after a time the suggestion of the regular ministry is made to him. If he responds he is sent with his wife and children to Tiger Kloof, where he takes a three-years' course in the Theological Department, at the end of which he is ordained, his wife meanwhile attending classes in such subjects as will help her in her new life as a minister's wife, and his children going to the elementary school. In the Theological Department men have been trained of whom Africa may well be proud.

Tiger Kloof is almost a town in itself, dedicated to the task of African education. It has its own station on the Cape to Cairo railway, its own imposing buildings, said by the Superintendent General of Education in the Cape Province, to be "the best for native education in South Africa." There, in the middle of the veld, boys and girls, young men and young women

THE FORWARD TREAD

are gathered from as far as five hundred miles away. Members of formerly hostile tribes are learning to play together in the football team, or in the Institution Band, and to work together in the class-room or on the farm. Here you will find an elementary school—used also as a practising school for the teachers in training—a Girls' Boarding School and a Boys' High School, an Industrial Department, a Teacher Training Section and a Theological Department. Nor is that all, for should any Tiger Kloof lad aspire to a University degree, he can go on to Fort Hare Native College, and work for the degree of the Cape University.

The first Principal gave Tiger Kloof its aims when he wrote:—"We believe that if we can send out a trained and inspired African ministry into the African Churches, trained and Christian masters and mistresses into the schools of their own people, disciplined young men and women who have been taught Christianity as well as the rudiments of knowledge; and craftsmen who have been dominated by the spirit of Tiger Kloof, while breathing its air of industry and acquiring its skill—I say if we can win these points the field is ours"—and Christ's.



CHAPTER FIVE

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

THE Bantu woman does not begin her married life with any exalted ideals. She has been taught from childhood that the one thing for which she lives is marriage, and that her life has its only meaning in sex. It is most improbable that she comes to her marriage a chaste woman, and still more improbable that anyone would think the better of her if she did.

From the hour of her marriage she is hedged about by an exacting domestic code and a whole host of taboos, the details of which differ in different tribes. Perhaps she must not go near the cattle-kraal; or in passing from one hut to another she must go round by the back of the village; or under no circumstances must she pronounce her husband's name. Nor is her lot an easy one. The heavy duties of house and garden fall to her. In the forest it is she who carries the load while her lord and master walks on ahead carrying only his spear; for his business is to screen her from danger, not to carry burdens. If you upbraided him and told him to take the load for her, no one would resent your suggestion more than the woman herself. The Bantu woman is perfectly well aware what she has in store for her when she marries. The fact that

THE FORWARD TREAD

there is no privacy in African home-life means that every young girl knows that she will sometimes be beaten and maltreated by her husband, occasionally be loaned for the night to some man visitor who may come to their village or hut, and be burdened with heavy manual tasks. She knows that marriage-money has been paid over to her clan by the man whose wife she becomes, and that her husband may quite possibly take one or more other wives, if he can afford to do so. To all this she makes no demur; it is in the accepted order of things; indeed she may even desire him to take other wives, for the more women in the establishment the greater the prestige, and the more to share the work.

It must not be thought that the Bantu woman has no rights. She has rights that are most carefully safe-guarded by tribal custom. If her husband persistently illtreats her she can go back to her home; her parents can return the marriage-money and the contract is at an end.

It has often been said that the Bantu wife is purchased, and that the *lobola*, or *mpango*, of so many cattle, or pots, is the price that is paid for her. It was a natural inference for a European to make, but it was a wrong one. The Bantu word is quite different from that which is used for buying in the market. The woman is not bought, nor does the man acquire the same kind of proprietary rights in her as he does when he buys a slave. A woman in African society is always regarded as a potential mother, and her children as a strength to the family. Her marriage means that her children will enrich another family rather than her own, and the marriage-money is a

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

compensation for the loss, a compensation which has to be returned should the woman prove childless, or should she run away; it is also a guarantee that her husband will treat her properly. The marriage payment is thus the legal aspect of the wedding, while the elaborate rites represent the religious side. Once the cattle are paid over the marriage must go forward.

Lunga, a thirteen-year old girl, at one of our Central African Schools, was sent for by her mother to come home and be married. The missionary arranged a meeting and talked with the mother, pointing out the wrong of marrying a girl so young and undeveloped, and of marrying her to a heathen man whom the girl had never seen. The mother agreed with all that was said, but returned in a few days with the intended bridegroom and many friends. Nothing could convince them that the marriage should not take place. The girl had been promised, the *mpango* had been paid, and the man wanted his wife. It was their custom and there was an end. Lunga, weeping bitterly, was handed over as a married woman.

Some people regard the marriage-money as the centre and cause of the degradation of Africa's womanhood; others see in it a safeguard of her person and her rights. But whatever its meaning, the custom has become so deeply embedded in African practice that a non-Christian Bantu woman would not feel that she had been properly married unless the marriage-money had been paid. She regards the payment as a white woman does her ring and marriage-lines. Is it a custom to be abolished or one which can be sublimated and given a place in the Christian home-life of the New Africa?

THE FORWARD TREAD

No question is more vital to Bantu home-life than polygamy, and the Church in Africa has no thornier problem to handle.

Polygamy is to be found in every part of Africa, and is probably a legacy from the days when constant inter-tribal warfare created a surplus of women. From the first, African society has known nothing of unattached people. Every orphan finds a home and every woman of marriageable age a husband. A spinster in Bantu society is unthinkable. This meant that many men had more than one wife, and as marriage-money had in every case to be paid, it became a sign of wealth and social prestige to have several wives. In the eyes of the African, polygamy is an honourable practice, and Government does not interfere with it; it dominates the life of the heathen tribes and threatens to invade the Christian Church. Almost as many policies are adopted in regard to it as there are Societies at work. One Society will admit polygamists to Church Membership, but not to Communion, another will deny membership altogether, while yet another insists on the total abandonment of all wives but one, regardless of consequences to the rejected but innocent women. Where all Societies agree is that the Christian ideal of marriage is a sacred trust, the purity of which must at all costs be maintained. Most native Christians are strongly opposed to countenancing polygamy in any way. Chief Khama, it will be remembered resolutely refused to obey his father's command to take a second wife.

"An old chief who had three wives," says Mary Kingsley, with her love for splashes of literary colour, "profoundly and vividly believed that exclusion from

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

Holy Communion meant eternal damnation. Yet he did not turn off the three wives he had lived with for years. He found the matter was not even to be compromised by turning off two and going to Church to be married to number three, for the ladies held together; not one of them would marry him and let the other two go, so the poor old chief worried himself to a shamrock and anybody else he could get to listen to him. His white trader friends told him not to be such an infernal ass. Some of his black fellow-chiefs said the missionary was quite right, and the best thing for him to do would be to hand over to them the three wives and go and marry a young girl from the Mission School. Personally they were not yet afflicted with scruples on the subject of polygamy, and, of course (being "missionary man" now) he would not think of taking anything for his wives, so they would do their best, as friends, to help him out of the difficulty."*

Clearly the Christian Church can aim at nothing less than the Christian ideal of marriage. The Le Zoute Conference declared, "This Conference is convinced that Christian Society must be built on Christian family life, and that the ideal of the Christian family life can only be realised in monogamy."† Others would have preferred to say, "The Christian Mission has no right to treat as illegal, conjugal unions contracted by heathen according to the legal standards of their people. We further hold that the Christian Mission has no right to refuse to such, if they believe in Christ, the sacrament of baptism and with it the right of entrance into the Christian Church." The

* *Travels in West Africa*, p. 212.

† *The Christian Mission in Africa*, by E. W. Smith, p. 51.

THE FORWARD TREAD

advocates of this position felt that a man who was already a polygamist should not be required to get rid of any of his wives; that monogamy should not be imposed from outside, especially as Christian influence European example, the poverty of the Bantu, and the increasing number of males in the population are steadily driving polygamy out of the land. In Bechuanaland it has largely disappeared, and home-life is slowly being Christianised.

Such home-life as there is in heathen Bantu Africa is cut across by the initiation rites. At puberty the boys and girls of many tribes are led away to separate camps specially prepared for them, where, under circumstances of the utmost secrecy, they are instructed for some weeks in what is considered necessary for adult life in the tribe.

The lads enter the ceremonies as novices, they come out initiates; they go in boys, they emerge as men with tribal rights; they enter fettered with taboos, they come out free, free at any rate to treat the opposite sex as their lawful prey. One who himself passed through such a puberty camp said, "Some of the things I had to do were for my good; they enabled me to take a severe thrashing without a murmur or a moan. But some of the things the young men had to perform were so vile and revolting that they made me sick. We learnt all sorts of songs. One of these gave the rules of hunting; another told how a man should rule his wife; another said what were the laws of inheriting goods from relatives; another gave the rules for good health; and still another described how one should act towards other tribes. . . . During the month we had been trained to endure

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

hardship; we had learnt much of the customs and folk-lore of the tribe; we had learnt many things about war and peace, about hunting and good manners, about women and children; we had heard some things that were wise and useful, but many more that were vile and filthy, and such as should never be taught to anyone.”*

The tendency of native Christians has been to denounce the camps, root and branch, for they believe that in practice the rites are upholders of heathenism and reaction. The story of Khama's stout refusal to go with his father to the ceremonies is typical.

Careful inquiry has, however, revealed two facts—first, the rites are deeply embedded in African life, and second, immorality is not an essential part of initiation. One Mission has, for a dozen years and more, been attempting to purify the ceremonies of their abominations and to retain them as occasions of giving instruction to adolescents. For a month lads and girls live with Christian teachers under conditions somewhat similar to those of the puberty camps, and are taught both tribal lore and Christian truth. It is a bold attempt to make Bantu youth Christian, while still remaining Bantu, but whether it is possible, or even desirable, to make such an attempt elsewhere in Africa is keenly disputed.

Another matter that touches the home-life of Africa very closely is the health of its people. The widespread impression that the African in his tribal state is a hefty, healthy mortal, is very far from the truth. The number of Englishmen who were classed C3 during the war amazed everyone. “Were we to apply

* *Beyond the Great Thirst Land*, by A. M. Chirgwin, p. 111-113.

THE FORWARD TREAD

the same standard of health to the native population of Africa," said Dr. Gilks at the Le Zoute Conference, "it would be found to be somewhere towards the end of the alphabet."*

Nearly half the children born in Africa die in infancy, in some parts the proportion occasionally reaches threequarters; while of those that live scarcely one in ten reaches fifty years of age. Although white administration has removed the old scourges of witchcraft and inter-tribal warfare, the death-rate is still appalling. The people die from illnesses that ought not to prove fatal. Their power of resistance is extremely slight.

The root causes are bad food and bad housing; causes that are happily removable.

The African everywhere is under-fed. His food is neither sufficient in amount—especially at certain times of the year—nor sufficiently varied. He is so poorly nourished that he has no reserves or stamina. As for his house, Dr. Gilks says, "The African hut is about the most insanitary kind of dwelling you can possibly imagine. It is dark; it has no fresh air in it, the walls are of mud, where every kind of insect can harbour, and there is a thatched roof where every kind of rat lives. We ourselves have taken sixty-three rats out of one hut after an outbreak of plague."

It is hardly surprising that tuberculosis claims its thousands and sleeping-sickness its tens of thousands.

To-day Government and Missions alike are tackling this problem, and already they have got a stranglehold on some of the diseases. Our own missionaries in Central Africa, for instance, by the use of new

* *The Christian Mission in Africa*, p. 74; *ibid* p. 78.

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

treatments are fighting a winning battle with yaws, and to a less degree with leprosy.

But doctors and hospitals can never cure Africa; the task is too stupendous. It is prevention not cure that Africa needs. Education in the simple facts of hygiene, closely related to the homes of the people, will do more than a host of hospitals. It is in such matters that Missions including the L.M.S. can and do help. Here are a few examples taken almost at random. The girls at Hope Fountain have regular instruction, both theoretical and practical, in applied hygiene. The lads at Tiger Kloof were taught to build and use latrines; while the girls there learn something of hygiene and sick nursing, and of the value and preparation of a varied diet. The women of Serowe are helped by women missionaries in the hour of motherhood, and are afterwards visited in their homes and taught new and better ways of feeding children. The boys of Mbereshi learn to build sanitary homes, while the girls of the Boarding School are led to regard their bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit, to be kept clean and pure, and to make their homes places of joy and health. The "old girls" are visited, and hints are given in the feeding of children and the arrangement of home-life. The women in the villages around Kawimbe are given simple instruction in home-craft, while once a year, in the holiday time, schools for women of two months' duration are held at various centres.

Hitherto we have been looking at home-life under tribal conditions. We must now look at the Bantu home where it has come into close touch with white life. Outside every township in South Africa may be seen the native location, a collection of squalid huts

THE FORWARD TREAD

and tin shanties, ugly to the last degree. Here the Africans, who are in white employ, live with their families. For the building of these huts they can afford nothing better than bits of corrugated iron, strips of linoleum, and flattened out petrol tins. Rows upon rows of such hovels, present an appearance that beggars description.

To those who know the location it is not surprising that every second child born in such surroundings mercifully dies, or that half the children are illegitimate. Drink and prostitution, brawling and death are daily features of these festering slums. How can there be any home-life there? Yet the miracle is wrought, for here and there one finds an attempt to be neat and homelike, and even Christian.

Happily the conscience of several towns has been aroused to this physical and moral menace at their doors, and at such places as Bloemfontein notable improvements are being made. This new social conscience is bound to spread, and the next decade will probably see considerable advance.

An allied problem affecting home-life is that of the half-caste. One person in every twelve in the Union of South Africa is "coloured," that is of mixed white and black parentage. In spite of the fact that mixed marriage is viewed with horror, there are more than half-a-million half-castes, or descendants of half-castes, many of them the offspring of illicit unions. There are no people more unhappily placed in Africa to-day than the "coloureds." They are disowned by the Whites, not wanted by the Blacks, and conscious that they are different from both. A Central African half-caste child put the position in a nut-shell. She

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

had had a quarrel with a Bantu child, and feeling sore, went to the missionary crying in bitterness of spirit, "I'm not their kind, I'm not your kind, I'm no kind at all."

It is clear that one of the greatest services Christianity can render to the new Africa is the gift of Christian home-life. It is easy to sneer at the measure of comfort which missionaries endeavour to maintain in their homes, but it is often forgotten what an eloquent sermon a refined missionary home can be to the people around. Even more eloquent is the home of a Bantu Christian.

About sixty years ago a Bechuana lad went into Cape Colony in search of work. He was engaged by a Dutch farmer who not only taught him to work, but also led him to Christ. After ten years Jacob Kgasa returned to his own tribe an ardent Christian, and in time became one of the leading deacons in the L.M.S. Church at Kanye. An eloquent preacher, a born leader and an attractive personality, Jacob's greatest gift to his tribe was probably his home. It was Christian while remaining Bantu. The prattle of children filled it, the home-made veld shoes proved that native craftsmanship was kept alive, a few books showed that the mind was being fed, while the daily family prayers and the cleanliness and peace that pervaded everything explained the wide influence that home had in all the country round. Jacob also made use of the knowledge he had gained in European methods of work, and his house and farm became models for his tribesmen to copy. He urged them to send their children to school, and led the way by sending his own. One of his sons went to Kuruman

THE FORWARD TREAD

Institution, then on to Lovedale, and finally took a theological course at Tiger Kloof. This son, now a trusted and ordained minister, Rev. Andrew Kgasu, has just completed ten years of excellent work as a missionary at the lonely outpost of Lake Ngami, while one of his daughters married another native L.M.S. minister, Rev. T. Mogwe.

Bantu women have in general been more responsive to the Christian Good News than men. More than sixty per cent. of the Church Members connected with L.M.S. work in Africa to-day are women. They have seen that in Christianity women are accounted more than chattels, and they have received with gladness its message of a more abounding life. The most casual observer will testify that it is possible to pick out the Christian women in a crowd at a glance. Not only are they tidier and cleaner in person, but the lack-lustre expression of their heathen sisters is replaced by an eager brightness and zest in life.

Women are, and always will be, the home-builders of Africa; but if they are going to build the sort of homes that Africa so sorely needs, Missions must give a more central place in their plans to the task of Christianising the home-life of the Bantu people. Equal attention must be given to the education of boys and girls. If one partner in marriage is educated and Christian while the other is illiterate and heathen, it is not likely that that home will greatly help Africa. Nor is it enough to give boys and girls an education that will fit them for life—their life not ours—and make them home-builders; you must follow-up by regular visitation in their homes after marriage, for the downward pull of African life is very great; you

HOME LIFE IN THE NEW AFRICA

must provide some literature on which their awakened minds can feed and keep fresh. It is not enough to lead great numbers of African women into the large freedom of Christ; you must have specially equipped women-missionaries who will help them to become intelligent and influential Christians in their homes and villages—in a word, makers of the New Africa.



CHAPTER SIX

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

IT is a staggering fact that there are more heathen in South Africa to-day than when Vanderkemp landed at the Cape nearly 130 years ago! It may be some reassurance to know that the Christians are increasing more than ten times as rapidly as the heathen, that there are over a million and a half Bantu Christians in the Union of South Africa, yet the fact remains that not one man in twenty in Africa to-day is a Christian. The Church of Christ has still a stupendous task to face.

It cost the L.M.S. a dozen lives and thirteen years of heroic toil before the first convert was baptized in Central Africa. To-day we have 2,000 communicant members there, and another 16,000 adherents are being led by way of inquirers' and catechumen classes into the full fellowship of the Church. These figures not merely tell of progress; they loudly affirm that Africans have a capacity for Christianity. The Bantu have produced outstanding leaders like Khama and Shomolekae, martyrs like the boys of Uganda, and an unnumbered host of rank and file Bantu who have simply and bravely followed Christ. In an even more remarkable way the Negroes of America have proved their ability to become good Christians. Their large-

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

ness of heart, their capacity to laugh and to forgive, their patience and great endurance, their amazing generosity for Church and other religious purposes, probably not surpassed by that of any people on earth,* and their yearning desire to help their needy brethren in Africa—all go to show that God has a place for them in His world-scheme. As Booker Washington said, "God must love the black folk, he made so many of them."

The goal of the missionary enterprise in Africa, as everywhere, is to plant the Church of Christ effectively—a Church that shall be self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting. The experience of more than a century has proved that the African makes a good Christian and a good Church-member. His life in the tribe is essentially social and corporate. He lives and moves and has his being, not as an individual but as a member of a group. He has all the capacity for life in a Society, and not least in the Christian Society. The Church with its bonds of fellowship, its corporate worship, its mutual service, its sense of brotherhood, its joyous festivals, its corporate Communion, would seem specially suited to his needs. And now that tribalism is crumbling and its hold slackening, the Bantu need all the more just the kind of social and spiritual support that the Church can give.

Here in a little mud-walled building at an out-station, a company of people are gathered for a service. They are mostly old men, women and children, for the young men are at the mines or the cattle-posts. The women and children sit on the ground, or perhaps on mud-benches, on one side, and the men and boys on

* M. S. Evans—*Black and White in the Southern States.*

THE FORWARD TREAD

the other. At the back and around the door sit a number of heathen in scant apparel, while in front is the little platform, or rostrum, of mud, which has been rubbed with cow-dung and water till it resembles marble. The preacher is perhaps a trained evangelist or he may be a deacon who reads in halting fashion from the Sechuana Bible, and expounds it with much imagery and eloquence

In preaching to the Bantu it is not necessary to argue for the existence of God. They firmly believe that He is. What the preacher has to do is to interpret to them the God Whose existence they already recognise.

A Central African evangelist finding one day that only the young people assembled for the service, went to the kraal-gate and asked the men gathered there:

"How is it that I find none but young people come to the service?"

"We do not understand about your God," they replied, "it is all new, we have not learned."

"But the God we declare is the God you worship. Come and honour Him."

"We thought He was a new God of the European. Yes, we will come."*

What the Bantu do not understand is the character of God. The missionary's task is therefore to present Him in a form they can understand, in a word to show what God is like; to tell in simple fashion the story of Jesus, explaining that God is like Christ. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.

It is obvious that this can never be done effectively for Africa except by the African. The Continent is

* *Winning a Primitive People*, by D. Fraser, p. 262.

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

too vast and the population too great, for missionaries ever to hope to preach the Gospel to everyone. Africans must be trained to share in the task. They will not only have a command of the language no missionary can achieve, but they will present the message in a way that will be acceptable to the African heart and mind. It is proverbially difficult to get at the back of the black man's mind, to know the modes of his thought and to "think black;" it is difficult even for the best linguists to speak without self-consciousness, to get the true idiom and to win to the hearts of the people by his choice of imagery and words. More and more preaching must be undertaken by the tribesman himself, and those who know Africa best agree that if statistics were available it would certainly be found that the vast majority of converts are brought in by the work of Africans.

The real task of the missionary is to plant the Church, and then to make himself unnecessary. If the preaching is always done by him there will inevitably grow up a Church in Africa which is hardly more than a pale copy of the Church in Europe, a Church which can never evoke the best of which the Bantu are capable, and in which they will never feel truly at home. What is needed is a Church that is at once Christian and Bantu, suited to the Bantu genius, with Bantu music and architecture, Bantu modes of worship and forms of Government. The missionary must from the first train the African for leadership and make the Church truly indigenous. His aim is not—or should not be—to write home every year and say that he has made such and such a number of converts; nor should the home-constituency ask it of him.

THE FORWARD TREAD

Such facts may make a resounding passage in a speech at a public meeting, but that is not the real thing. The great objective is to plant in Africa a Church that shall produce its own leaders and evangelists, and shall itself carry the Gospel throughout the Continent.

Missionaries of the L.M.S., as far back as Moffat recognised this, and set about training men to be preachers and leaders of the Christian community. Few saw this need more clearly than John Mackenzie and J. Tom Brown, who for years bent their powers to the task of training Bantu Christians in the Moffat Institution at Kuruman, the first Theological College opened by the L.M.S. in Africa. Some thought they were wasting their talents, but it was the men they trained who carried the Good News through Bechuanaland, from the Orange River to Lake Ngami.

The building of the Cape to Cairo railway made Tiger Kloof much more accessible than Kuruman, and the Theological College was accordingly moved, and is now a worthy part of that great Institution. Likely men, who are qualified in other ways, are sent from all parts of our South Africa Mission for a three-years' course. In this theological department dozens of Bantu preachers have been trained, including most of the ordained and unordained men now working in connection with the L.M.S. in South Africa.

In Central Africa we have as yet no ordained Africans, though there are some fifty unordained evangelists. The growth of the Central Africa work will necessitate a theological training centre before long within its own area.

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

Admission to the Church is necessarily more carefully guarded in the mission-field than in the home-land. In Britain the atmosphere is saturated with Christian ideals, and the level of moral life outside the Church is not greatly different from that within. In Africa, on the other hand, there is heathenism all round the Church, and its down-pull is very great. Consequently backsliding is not uncommon; immoral practices, condoned by heathen opinion, tend to creep into the Church; the fight to maintain a high moral level is often found hard and given up; lapses take place, feuds break out, and the disciplining of members is painfully frequent. It is not at all uncommon to hear missionaries say:—"We hardly dare seek new converts; we are not sufficiently nurturing those we have."

Admission to Church membership must therefore be made a searching process. It is in the first fine rapture of the Christian life that converts learn most eagerly, and it is just then that the best teaching work can be done by the missionary or the evangelist. If the Church is to be virile and progressive this work must under no circumstances be treated lightly. Should the missionary aim at quality or quantity? Should his work be extensive or intensive? It might even be in the best interests of the Church in Africa that he should cover less ground, and give himself more fully to the instruction of those entering the Christian fellowship.

Again, is the nurturing and instructing of inquirers the work of the missionary or of the local Church-leaders? Probably at first it must be done by the missionary, as there is none other advanced enough

THE FORWARD TREAD

in the Christian life to undertake it. But as soon as possible, and certainly at a very early stage, this task is put upon the local Church. No one can so well instruct the Bantu inquirer as a Bantu Christian who knows precisely the pitfalls of Bantu life and the pressure of temptation in an African home and village. The missionary will give himself more and more to the training of these trainers. When he crosses the threshold of the Church the Bantu inquirer finds himself at the foot of a stair-way up which he must climb step by careful step into the full communicant membership of the Church.

Requirements are not the same for all places, but for the most part inquirers are gathered into classes which meet once a week for a year, where they study portions of the Bible and a simple Catechism. During that time their conduct is under constant consideration by the Christians of the community; any alleged faults—and in an African village nothing is private—are investigated. If all is satisfactory the inquirer passes at the end of the year into a catechumen class, where for an hour or so each week for another two years he is further instructed in the things necessary to full membership, and examined at intervals by the missionary or native minister. Unless special exception is made on account of age or infirmity every candidate must be able to read the New Testament, the Catechism and the Hymn Book; he must pass a test in moral fitness, and must show during the three years satisfactory progress in Christian life and service. It is the practice at Kanye, for instance, for the missionary, the African ministers and deacons to examine the third year catechumens orally a few days

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

before the annual gathering. The candidates are usually questioned as to their Christian experience and their Biblical knowledge; the Church laws are read out, and they are asked if they are willing to keep them. Those who pass the tests are recommended for membership on the Saturday afternoon at a special Church gathering. The Christians present are asked to state any objections or ask any questions, and finally to receive the candidates by solemn vote into the fellowship of the Church.

On the Sunday morning the candidates, dressed for the most part in white clothes, attend worship, and any who were not baptized in infancy receive baptism. Then all the candidates leave the Church by a side-door, and the deacons and deaconesses line up the aisle while the minister goes to the main entrance where the candidates are now assembled; the door is opened and the minister shakes hands with each one at the threshold, as a symbol of welcome into the Christian fellowship. As they pass up the aisle they are further welcomed by the officers, while the congregation sings. When all have entered, a silence that can almost be felt settles on the congregation; there is awe and expectancy in the atmosphere. Then a solemn prayer is offered, words of welcome are spoken, and a memorable occasion ends with an impressive communion. After the service the missionary and deacons again meet the new members and divide them into groups, so that each group is under the special care of one or more deacons for the next year or so.

During the period of preparation for Church Membership Bantu Christians learn that it is part of their Christian privilege to support their own Church, to

THE FORWARD TREAD

share in its government, and to hand on to others the faith they themselves have received. It is interesting to note that while in 1925 the home Churches raised for work in Africa some £14,939, the African Christians themselves in the same year raised £7,349. Even when allowance is made for school fees it will be found that the free-will offerings of African Christians connected with the L.M.S. amount to about 6s. 8d. per Church-member per year. When the poverty of the native people is remembered this is seen to be a notable achievement, and the amount is almost exactly equal to the average amount annually contributed by Congregationalists in the British Isles to the world work of the L.M.S.

Total abstinence from intoxicants is required of all Church members in L.M.S. areas; nor may Christians either attend or give countenance to the initiation ceremonies. Bantu Christians generally, knowing the danger of opening the door even the least bit to the practices associated with paganism, have, with Khama, advocated strict abstention as essential for the Christian. The African Church must more and more decide such matters for itself; hence it is increasingly necessary that the Church should be adequately instructed in order to find for itself the mind of Christ.

Another question that is yearly becoming more urgent is, what kind of Church shall we aim at establishing in Africa—a national or a denominational one? The African is apt to be a partisan; he tends to transfer his strong tribal feeling to the Christian Church and often to be a more ardent denominationalist than the missionary who instructs him.

It would obviously be wrong to burden the Bantu with denominational differences which can have no

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

spiritual significance for them. Further, we of the L.M.S. in the prophetic words of our Founders, 132 years ago, have it as our "fundamental principle that it is not our design to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church order or government, but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, to the heathen; and that it shall be left (as it ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God shall call into the Fellowship of His Son from among them to assume for themselves such form of government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God."

This is a bold, spiritual policy, beset with difficulties, but it is, we believe, the Christian way.

The alternative to a denominational Church would seem to be a national one, and the door is open at once to all the dangers of Ethiopianism—that is, the spirit of racialism within the Church. Ethiopianism in religion has led to large secessions from the Churches under Mission control, and in many cases the result has been spiritual inefficiency if not disaster. Once again the moral of it all is the necessity of giving careful instruction to those who enter the Christian fellowship, and especially to those who, as leaders, shape its policy.

This cannot be done apart from Christian literature, in the provision of which missionaries have been almost alone. But for missionaries there would scarcely be any books in existence to-day in the various Bantu languages. It was they who reduced these languages to writing, and produced the first beginnings of a Bantu literature. The Bible in whole, or in part, has now been translated into 243 African languages,

THE FORWARD TREAD

and the Christian Church in Africa is generally speaking a literate Church. But what books are available for those who have learnt to read? The average library in a Bantu tongue could easily be carried in a pocket-handkerchief. "It is not exceptional for a candidate for Baptism to have read everything that has ever been printed in his language."*

In both Chibemba and Kimambwe, the two languages spoken in our Central Africa area, we find the New Testament, a hymn book, a catechism, and a few school books. But the total library, including pamphlets, would not occupy more than a foot of space on a bookshelf. In our larger and longer established South African mission, where the two main tongues are Sechuana and Sindebele, there is naturally a much fuller literary provision. Nevertheless, in the two languages put together there are not yet sixty books and leaflets: the whole library might be put into a small suit-case.

In putting Africa to school and in teaching Africans to read, the Christian Church has assumed a great responsibility, and has created a mental hunger in the Bantu people. It is clear that something more than the present literary provision is necessary if the Bantu Church is to give the right sort of leadership to the people of Africa. No one mission, working alone, can hope to do what is necessary, and to-day there is growing up a practice of joint production of literature by all the Societies working in any one language area. This task demands from the home Churches the best brains of the best linguists.

The question is asked sometimes if the missionary

* *International Review of Missions*, July, 1921, p. 378.

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

enterprise in general, and that of the L.M.S. in particular, is making good in Africa? The statistics on page **xxx** will furnish a partial reply, but the fullest answer will be found in the lives of those whom Christ has touched.

Not long since a missionary in Bechuanaland paid an evening visit to the home of a pagan Bantu named Yanki, who was both old and blind. "On reaching the house I heard voices round at the back. There I saw about a dozen women and a few young men, with old Yanki, listening to a young woman reading the Bible and explaining it. Silently I joined them, and when the service was over one of the women said to me,

"Why are you going away from us, missionary? Who will lead us when you are gone? Look," she said, pointing to the little company that had been worshipping, "this is your work, you must not leave it." "No," I replied, "it is not my work; it is the work of Nkokodi, the wife of Yanki." "True," she rejoined, "but you taught her to love and read her Bible and now she teaches us."

"A mental picture of the woman referred to rose up before my mind. She had been one of the first to join a Bible Class started by my wife; later she became a deaconess of the Church, a Bible-woman and a teacher of the third-year catechumen class. I had often heard her pray, and once I had heard her preach to a large heathen crowd. I knew that in addition to supporting a blind husband and her own children she had taken sole charge of her sister's children, when that sister died. Despite the heavy burdens she bore and her poverty, her person and her

THE FORWARD TREAD

home were always spotlessly clean. I remembered with what joy she had come to tell me of the conversion of eight old women whom she had employed to help her build a hut. At mid-day when it became too hot to work she used to call a halt and read the Bible to her helpers, and soon her old women joined the catechumen classes. I remembered the class of thirty children from heathen homes whom she had gathered together at the close of day and taught in the Christian way of life."

Kipowe, the missionary's right-hand man at Kambole to-day was in childhood carried off as a slave-boy and afterwards redeemed. He was lifted out of the mire by Christian hands, sent to Livingstonia for training, and is now a teacher evangelist, an intelligent preacher, and a resourceful leader of the people. He could obtain three times his present salary in Government employ, but he refuses to leave his work as missionary's assistant. For years his heathen relatives urged him to put away his wife as she was childless, but his Christian principles proved stronger than the concentrated force of pagan pressure and custom. To-day his home, resounding at last to a child's happy prattle, is a model to the whole community. His judgment is so sound that the missionary takes no important step without discussing it with him, and not infrequently modifies his own opinions in deference to those of his Bantu assistant, and during his absence on furlough is able to leave all the work of the station in his hands without the slightest misgiving.

Time would fail to tell of Shomolekae and Timothy Kandeke, of Rachel Masinga and Semane, of lepers and witch-doctors, of children of slaves and slaves

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

of sin, lifted, re-made, delivered by the touch of Christ.

The Church of Christ is rapidly becoming the core of the life of the New Africa. In the place where that wily old Chieftain Sekgome lit his sorcerer's fire, there now stands a Christian Church, the largest and most commanding building in Serowe. At Kambole the day begins with the whole village coming with happy morning faces to prayer in the long thatched Church. At Hope Fountain and Tiger Kloof, at Kawimbe and Mbereshi, the Church is the centre round which the whole life revolves. This central position of the Church is a parable of what is happening in many places in Africa. The tribe is losing grip, the Church is trying to get firmer hold; paganism is decaying, but Christianity is taking root. Not so long ago a Government Commissioner visited our Mbereshi Girls' School, and he admitted that it was a shock to him. He had no conception, he said, that the African girl could be made the intelligent, delightful person that she is in that School. It left him speechless. He went through that School as if in a dream. He said again and again that it was an overwhelming shock to him.

Three or four of those girls had shortly before done an almost unheard of thing. The holidays were over and it was time for them to return to school, but it was the cultivation season, and none of the men could leave their work to take the girls the long, hazardous journey through the forest. But a sense of devotion to duty—a new thing in Central Africa—had grown in those girls' hearts, and knowing well the risks, they packed up their loads of food and for five days tramped through the forests, the big ones carrying

THE FORWARD TREAD

the little ones, and all sleeping at night under the trees.

Every Christmas the girls enact the Nativity Scene. A black Madonna, her face transfigured with reverent awe, sits in the *nsaka* gazing down at the little black baby she holds in her arms, while around is a great crowd of men and women, many of whom have long distances to travel to their homes. One by one they come silently up to the hut, and light their torches at the lamp, and turn their footsteps homewards. Soon the little flickering lights are spreading in all directions, radiating out from the hut of the Christ-child. So spreads the light across a darkened land.

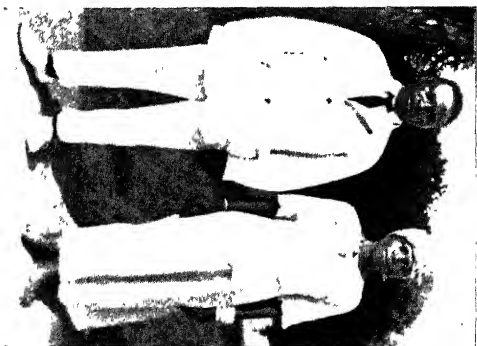
Girls trained in our schools and now married, are setting up new standards of home-life. Young Christian couples who have gone to the copper mines, where they are fiercely tempted and openly scorned for being faithful to one another, are yet fighting a winning battle. A missionary itinerating in his district may spend one night near a drunken village, where filthy songs are shouted and obscene dances performed till after midnight; and he may spend the next night camped near a Christian village, and hear from some near-by hut the laughter of happy children and the quiet voices of contented people, followed by the reading and prayer of family worship. Who shall say that Christ is not winning Africa?

After visiting one of our leper camps in Central Africa a missionary wrote,

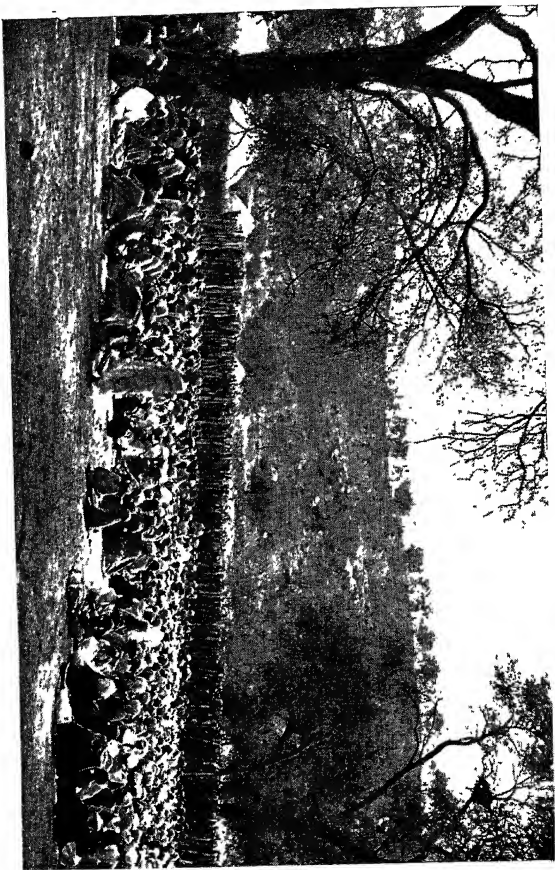
"They gave me such a glad welcome, and as I went one old deformed and disease-eaten man got a spear from his little house and came hobbling after me. I told him to stay behind, I didn't need him, but he followed on the little grass-choked path, telling me



RACHEL MASINGA
A FORMER TEACHER AT HOPE FOUNTAIN



KIPOW E. AND HIS WIFE
(see page 94)



A SUNDAY SERVICE AT SEROWE

HOW THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

that a lion had been around the previous evening and I mustn't go alone. I looked at him, so feeble, no fingers, no toes, diseased, deformed, powerless, and I said gently, 'But you couldn't protect me, you haven't the strength.' He drew himself up and said, 'Have I not a body to give?' " Is it surprising that that missionary wrote, "Always I can say this—they are worth dying for, and the harder thing, living for, worth giving all, loving to the uttermost."



Tiger Kloof Native Institution

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

A NEW Africa is being born, and with it our missionary enterprise is entering upon a new era. In the last few years we have passed from the ox-wagon to the Ford-car stage; from reliance on partially-trained evangelists to an increasing use of trained and ordained African ministers; from educational hap-hazardness to considered plans worked by staffs of trained teachers; from a complete disregard of African education by European administrations to an age of Government commissions, directors of native development, and permanent advisory committees on Native Education; from a go-as-you-please mission policy in Africa to an era of co-operation between practically all missionary societies; from Government aloofness towards missions to a keen desire by Government to work with and through missionary societies; from an idea that anything and anyone will do for Africa to a conviction that nothing and no one is too good for Africa.

In the Africa of yesterday the L.M.S. played a great part, chiefly through the Christian personality of its missionaries. We salute the memory of those men who, without roads or railways, without boats or cars, without charts or maps, without Government

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

help or strong backing from home, without literature or lexicons, without hospitals or doctors, went out in faith, crossed unknown mountains, explored mighty rivers, established friendly relations with unheard-of peoples, made peace between ever-fighting tribes, taught handicrafts, reduced strange languages to writing, gave the people the Bible in their own tongue, built schools and churches, preached the Gospel far and wide, and drove a mighty Christian wedge into pagan Africa from the Cape to the Equator.

The great place taken by the L.M.S. in the Africa of yesterday is a call to us to take our large and rightful share in the Africa of to-day and to-morrow.

There is still a need for pioneers who will press into the unreached areas of pagan Africa. There are still myriads who have never heard the Good News, and only 6,000,000 out of the 135,000,000 in the Continent are in effective touch with Christianity. But pioneers are more particularly needed to press into the newly-developing activities and aspects of Africa's life. The Church must be firmly planted and become indigenous; with the school it has to become the new centre of the African community; the leaders have to be trained, fresh and hard thinking has to be done, bold and enterprising action has to be undertaken. It is pioneering still, but in other realms; an adventure still, but demanding a higher faith and courage than ever before.

"The new call," said Mr. J. H. Oldham at the Le Zoute Conference, "is to a fresh advance, a further step forward, an enlargement of our conception of the mission of the Christian Church. It is not a substitute for the call sounded by the pioneers of the

THE FORWARD TREAD

Missionary Movement a century ago; still less is it something that contradicts that call, or makes it less imperative and urgent than before. Rather is it a call to go further, to break fresh ground, to expand our ideals of what the missionary obligation involves."*

Trained Christian leadership is our prime need in Africa to-day, nor is Africa incapable of doing this. The race that has given birth to Khama and Shomolekae, Jabavu and Aggrey, Yergan and Kandeke, has potentialities of which no people need be ashamed. At every station this essential task of training Young Africa for Christian leadership is being undertaken. But there are only thirty-two Africa missionaries, all told, in our Society, to give this training, and their areas are so vast that they spend much of their time on trek or "ulendo." As long ago as 1896 the L.M.S. had thirty missionaries in Africa. In the meantime the population has increased, our areas and responsibilities have grown, but our staff has been stationary. We are so inadequately staffed and our Christian occupation is so ineffective that it is a little surprising that other Societies do not plainly tell us so, and bid us get on or get out. The time may come when we shall have to cede territory which we have failed to occupy through lack of men and means. Is a staff of thirty-two Europeans all that our Churches can do for Africa?

The interest and co-operation of Government in all forms of educational and industrial work ought to do much to meet Africa's need for trained leadership. The Churches can undertake as much Christian educational work in Africa as they choose, they can literally

* *The Christian Mission in Africa*, p. 163.

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

send out dozens of educationists, and Government will meet the cost, in part or in whole, on the one condition that the work is done efficiently and by competent people. The Church Missionary Society boldly asks for fifty new educational missionaries for this work. For how many shall the L.M.S. call?

Successful work, too, creates its own problems. The Hope Fountain Girls' Boarding School may serve as an example. The School originated almost by accident. One girl, and then a second, fled a hundred miles from cruel parents and evil custom to the protection of the missionary's home. Their sheer need gave the original impulse, and as others came the problem of accommodation became acute. At first they were fitted into a room or two at the back of the Mission House; then any available odd corner was turned to account; as the numbers grew a small hostel was built out of a rickety of old bricks; then more substantial but very simple buildings were added, until seventy-five boarders are in residence in addition to whom there are some sixty day-girls. The school course goes up to Standard VI, and includes instruction in handicrafts and housewifery. From the rising-bell at 6.30 a.m. till the prayer-bell at 7 p.m. the girls share in a full and eager life which is closely related to that of a Bantu village. The disciplined freedom which marks the conduct of the school gives an impression of that cheerful self-respect upon which a Government Inspector has commented.

Such successful enterprise needed something more than the occasional attention that a missionary, with many other and prior duties could give. A competent and full-time educationist was necessary; and in 1922

THE FORWARD TREAD

one was sent. But there were other problems ahead. When the furlough of this missionary fell due there would be no one to take her place. The resident missionary could at most give supervision, and the four African girl-teachers would not be fitted for such serious responsibility. The success of the school has attracted attention, and Government urged that a Normal School for Teacher Training should be added to its activities, and the increasing need of our own schools in Matabeleland for well-trained teachers served to enforce this. This step is being taken, and a second woman educationist, to be paid by the Government, is being added to the staff, and by the time this book is in print a beginning will have been made in teacher-training. Hope Fountain is more and more becoming the pivot of our Matabele work, as Tiger Kloof is of our Bechuanaland enterprise.

Similarly in Central Africa we have two main centres, Kawimbe on the Eastern side and Mbereshi on the West. Already we have at the latter evangelistic, educational, industrial and medical work being carried on. A Boys' Boarding School has recently been opened so that boys' education may not lag behind that of the girls. It is hoped, as we shall see, to add a woman doctor to the Mbereshi staff, while thorough-going teacher-training is being developed. Our elementary educational work in Central Africa has grown so rapidly of late years that the number of schools is far in excess of the supply of teachers. Many of the schools can only meet for about ten weeks in the year as the scarcity of teachers is so great that many of them go for periods of service from village to village in turn. "Had we more teachers," the missionaries

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

say, "we could keep the schools open longer." It is not only the number, but also the efficiency of the teachers that constitutes a problem. The only training most of them have consists in attendance at an annual summer school of a few weeks. Clearly there is need for more, and for better-equipped teachers, and the new teacher-training centre to be developed at Mbereshi is designed to meet that need. Before long a Bible School, or Theological Institution, for training evangelists and ministers must be added to the many activities at this station.

In the whole of Africa to-day there are only 139 medical missionaries for 135,000,000 Africans—hardly more than one per million! There are Government doctors, but they are few and far between. We of the L.M.S. have had no medical missionary in South Africa since Livingstone; while the one doctor we have in Central Africa is so immersed in district and educational work that he has little or no time for medical service. Many of our missionaries, particularly those in remote places, where they may be a week or more from the nearest doctor, take short courses in elementary medicine in order that they may be able to keep themselves in health and to act in an emergency. Slight as this training is it has been wonderfully effective. There has not been a death amongst our Central Africa staff for twenty-four years, and all our missionaries there, save those recently appointed, have served over twenty years each, and some over thirty. But something more than a few weeks' training is necessary to deal with the great problems of Africa's health.

Repeated requests have been made for doctors to

THE FORWARD TREAD

be sent out to such places as Serowe, with its considerable native population, Lake Ngami, cut off by a journey of several weeks from civilisation, Tiger Kloof, where £120 a year is spent on securing a monthly medical inspection and the occasional attendance of a doctor from Vryburg, and Mbereshi with its growing population and importance. A doctor at one or more of these points would do more than heal disease, he would direct health-education and welfare work. At Mbereshi, for instance, a woman doctor would care for the pupils and the staff, give simple instruction in health and allied subjects to the boys and girls in the Boarding Schools, to the evangelists and women who come for their special summer schools of ten weeks every year, to the teachers and pastors who will in future be trained there, as well as organise child welfare-work and instruction in hygiene among the women of the neighbouring villages, and train a few African assistants as nurses, midwives and medical evangelists. In this fight for health missionary nurses are almost as greatly needed as doctors. They will have access to the homes of the people where this battle will be fought. From South Africa in particular this call comes.

In Central Africa we have responsibility for 100,000 Bantu in an area where Livingstone fought his great fight with the slave-trade. Yet in the places which have undying association with his name such as Ujiji, where he was found by Stanley, and Old Chitambo, where he died upon his knees in prayer, we have no representative. Indeed, at neither place is there a Christian missionary to-day! Old Chitambo, now a decayed village, is two or three weeks' journey from

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

our present area, but is within reach of a station of one of the Scottish Societies. Ujiji is now, as in Livingstone's day, a Moslem stronghold. Its only contact with Christianity is an occasional visit by Roman Catholic missionaries from Kigoma. There is no Protestant Society within reach; probably the L.M.S. is as accessible as any, Ujiji being only two days' journey from Kasanga.

The occupation of Ujiji by the L.M.S. would not only be part of our response to the call of the Moslem world, it would also be a definite link between our present work and our great explorer-missionary, which would touch the imagination of the Churches. But such an enterprise must not be attempted unless it can be done worthily. To plant a solitary missionary there, 300 miles from his nearest colleague, would be to repeat the errors of the past. The whole trend of mission-strategy to-day is away from one-man stations. Although they make possible more extensive work, yet the problems created in times of furlough and sickness outweigh the advantages. The Church can best be planted and African leadership trained where two or more missionaries work from the same station, building up a strong centre from which influence radiates in every direction. This is our present policy in Africa—a vast area and a varied service, but with strongly-developed work at a couple of centres, both in Central and in South Africa. If such an enterprise as Ujiji is to be undertaken a team of three or four missionaries should be the aim in order to carry on between them a wide range of Christian service. A generation ago a great advance into the Awemba country was made, and the fruitful work of Mpolokoso

THE FORWARD TREAD

and Mbereshi, Chiengi and Kafulwe resulted. Why should not the occupation of Ujiji be the new advance in Central Africa for this generation?

The past, as well as the future, demands that the L.M.S. should undertake a piece of work on a really large scale somewhere in South Africa, some big and bold attempt to win a whole people for Christ. At present our most developed work in South Africa is at Tiger Kloof and Hope Fountain, but neither is near any large centre of native population. Serowe, on the other hand, is the tribal head-quarters, and the largest purely Bantu town in Africa; it has had close association with the L.M.S. for three-quarters of a century, and it has to-day over 3,000 Church-members in the town and district. In no other centre have we such a chance of winning a whole people. Serowe for Christ should surely be another big objective. Serowe means the Bamangwato tribe, and the Bamangwato are the largest Bantu tribe with which we are in touch.

More than one visitor to Africa has said that it was comparatively rare to come across a middle-aged woman whose face in repose showed the slightest sign of happiness. Life is hard for the Bantu woman, and she ages quickly. Indeed when she has reached her 35th year, buoyancy has gone from her step, lustre from her eye, and joy from her heart. This is true even of the Christian women, though the younger amongst them are not so dejected in appearance. Those—a mere handful—who have been to one or other of our boarding schools present a more attractive appearance.

In our South African mission we have 50% more

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

women than men, while in such places as Serowe and Molepolole there are twice as many women as men in the membership of the Church. Most of these women have a very defective understanding of the Christian faith, and there have been grave lapses into illiteracy and stagnation amongst them. They clearly need special help of the kind that an understanding woman missionary could give. Until 1925 we had no women evangelistic missionaries in South Africa, and we are still without any in Central Africa. Here is a pressing need. Women are the makers of the home, and the teachers of religion all the world over. While they remain semi-Christian, Africa's Christianity will continue to be only skin-deep, for no country can ever be lifted above the level of its womanhood. The women of Africa call very urgently just now to the Christian women of our Churches at home.

Women missionaries are needed not to add to the present excess of women over men in the membership of the Church, but to shepherd and train those already in Christian fellowship, to help them to stand up to life, and not become the bedraggled and lack-lustre individuals that their depressing environment always tends to make them.

A Director of the L.M.S. recently visiting Central Africa after an absence of 22 years, writes: "It has been a very real pleasure to see many signs of advance in the life of the country at large, and in our own L.M.S. share in it. But honesty compels the statement that on the whole there is a sense of disappointment that during the 22 years the advance has not been greater. The members of the Church at home are not without responsibility for this state of backwardness. They

THE FORWARD TREAD

and the workers in the field are not separate entities, unitedly they can and must attempt greater things in the future."

The task of winning Africa will not be easy. We have been in Central Africa for 50 years, yet we are only now laying the foundations. During the first quarter of a century the average length of missionary service was less than 4 years. Under the circumstances there could be neither continuity of effort nor an agreed policy. Accordingly the lives of the tribes around have not yet been deeply affected, and the struggle both in Central and in South Africa is likely to be a grim one. It is difficult to exaggerate the sway of fear, the power of the old people in the villages, and the awful hold of witchcraft and superstition. Even educated lads and girls, who have lived for years in Christian boarding schools are often unable to stand against these things, and fall back into the old degrading ways. The conquest of Africa for Christ will be at the price of pain and blood.

That there has been success beyond what we had any right to expect is proved by the fact that in the last ten years the number of Church-members in Central Africa has increased ten-fold. In the Awemba country there are 1,000 Church-members, and nearly 10,000 in preparation, while twenty-two years ago the Awemba work had only just been started; and at Kawimbe the Sunday morning congregations average over 700, the afternoon Enquirers' Class is usually well over 500, and the weekly Catechumens' Class is nearly as large. It is precisely these numbers that constitute a problem. How can a catechumen class of 500 help taking the form of a public service, or

THE L.M.S. IN THE NEW AFRICA

how can there be that essential personal contact between teacher and taught in a preparation class for Church-membership when numbers are so large? How can 3,000 Church-members, and many more thousands of adherents at Serowe and its out-stations be adequately cared for by a man and a woman missionary with a dozen African colleagues? Can the needed Christian leaders be produced from a primitive background when no one has the time to give the necessary patient, personal preparation? Are the home Churches doing their duty by Africa when the sum total in money that they send to that country annually is less than is spent on erecting one decent Church building in England?

Ability to read the New Testament in their own language is required of all candidates before admission to full Church membership, save in the case of those too old to learn. But many fail to keep up their reading and for them the Bible ceases to be a perennial inspiration and a permanently open book. There are 25,000 children in our African schools. Three or four years after leaving school, how many of them will have lapsed into illiteracy, and its mental and spiritual sterility? Only a literate Church, in daily touch with God, through the Bible and other channels, can save Africa. There are 12,000 Church members and 25,000 adherents. Are there a hundred men of Christian calibre and leadership among them? Has the African Church sent its roots down so firmly into the soil of Africa's life that no matter what might happen it would continue to live and grow? To this daughter Church of ours in Africa, black but comely, have we given a real chance?

THE FORWARD TREAD

"Unless a native Christian civilisation in Africa can be developed in the next 25 years, there must be disaster on the grand scale . . . one thing, and one thing only, can save the situation, and that is an immediate out-pouring of life for Africa by the Church at home."*

The task God has given us in Africa is not in itself impossible, else it would not have been given. We ought, therefore we can. But impossible the task will become unless the whole church is prepared for an immensely greater measure of self-sacrifice and service.

" . . . the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road.

Not for us are content, and quiet and peace of mind,
For we go seeking a city that we shall never find,
Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the wind and the rain,

And the watch-fire under the stars, and sleep, and the road again.

We seek the City of God". (John Masefield.)

"Lord take our minds and think through them,
Take our lips and speak through them.
Take our hearts and set them on fire."

** The Call from Africa, pp. 134-5.*

THE END

AFRICA, 1927

FIELDS	WHEN BROUN.	Mission areas		AFRICAN AGENTS.				CAUTION MEMBERS.		AFRICAN ADVERTISEMENTS.	SUNDAY SCHOOLS.						SCHOOLS.						LOCAL CENTRAL BUREAU.
		MEN.	WOMEN.	ORDAINED.	UNORDAINED MEN.	CHRISTIAN TEACHERS (MEN).	CHRISTIAN TEACHERS (WOMEN).	CAUTION MEMBERS.			NO.	SCHOOLS.	SCHOOLS BOYS.	YEN.	SCHOOLS GIRLS.	YEN.	LOCAL CENTRAL BUREAU.						
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I. SOUTHERN AFRICA— I. BECHUANALAND— KURUMAN (21 Out-stations) TAUNGS (37 Out-stations) TLOK KLOOF YATBURG (24 Out-stations) KATYE 36 Out-stations) MOLLEPOG (7 Out-stations) SHEWEE (30 Out-stations) LAKE NGAMI (18 Out-stations).	1818	1	..	8	7	12	6	400	1014	400	19	878	15	458	8 10 0	428	403 18 8						
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